United Nations A/62/PV.113

General Assembly

Sixty-second session

Official Records

113th plenary meeting
Friday, 18 July 2008, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Kerim ..... (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Meeting on the global food and energy crisis

Agenda item 48 (*continued*)

Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields

Mr. Pramudwinai (Thailand): Thank you, Mr. President, not just for convening this timely meeting today, but for your stimulating statement this morning urging the world to jointly address this highly important and urgent global food and energy crisis. I also wish to thank the Secretary-General for his leadership in mobilizing the United Nations and other relevant organizations to respond to these challenges, resulting in the comprehensive framework for action.

Allow me to also mention my delegation's full support for the calls by Indonesia, Egypt and Chile, as reflected in their joint letters to the President-elect of the General Assembly at its sixty-third session, for the Assembly to include food and energy security and development as a central theme of the upcoming sixty-third session. Today, in the sixty-second session, you, Sir, are laying a foundation for further deliberations at the next session.

The comprehensive framework for action has provided a comprehensive picture of the what, why and how of the crisis. I could not agree with you more, Sir, and with all the other speakers this morning, that the global food and energy crisis calls for urgent and collective actions. Indeed, the challenges of this issue is staring us in the face. We all know its severity, gravity and devastating effects, and we know full well that the matter has progressed beyond the stage for reflecting on and lamenting its nature, causes and problems. The concern before us now is, rather, how to tackle it. Tackling it jointly, with political will and genuine resolve, is the only way to go, and concrete steps must be taken in that regard.

Thailand is the world's fifth largest food producer and a top rice-exporting country, it is in our interests — and our intention — to join the world in doing our best to help alleviate the food problem facing us all today. Thailand will increase its production capacity, or will at least maintain its level of production, and export 9 million tons of rice per year to the world market.

While Thailand has an innate natural capacity to grow both food and energy crops, the Thai Government has no policy of prioritizing the production of energy crops over food crops. Rather, biofuels have so far been produced from crops that are surplus to domestic food consumption, such as cassava and sugar cane. Although we are not a net energy importer, like some other less fortunate countries, we share the pain of those countries when seeing the impact of the rise of fuel costs on the livelihoods of their people, not to mention the destabilizing effect that these price hikes have had on world economic activities.

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But the relevant question is: How much have speculation, financial volatility and supply and demand factors contributed to this hike? How much speculation has spiralled into attempts at market manipulation? The world is governed by a free-market economy. We all believe in market forces. But if market forces are partially steered by manipulative efforts, it is incumbent upon the international community to rectify that, with the objective of stabilizing prices. Can prices be maintained at a comfortable level for all consumers, all producers and those in the energy business alike, for an extended period, say two or three years? That would be possible if and only if the political will is there and when we realize that the results of inaction would be too damaging for any country to bear or for the world economy to sustain. In tackling this global food and energy crisis, can we count on the United Nations to put its efforts into real and concrete actions?

Mr. Tarar (Pakistan): Allow me at the outset to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting to address the food and energy challenges before us. We also thank the Secretary-General for presenting the comprehensive framework for action. Pakistan associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Antigua and Barbuda on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

The triple challenge of food, fuel and finance that we are facing today has serious economic and social ramifications, especially for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the aim of making poverty history. The current food crisis has affected millions of people in developing countries. The crisis is a result of the neglect of agriculture; bad policies on trade; biofuels; market speculation; natural disasters; and the impact of climate change. The international community's response has to be urgent, coherent and comprehensive. The current emergency phase should focus mainly on meeting the needs of stressed and vulnerable groups. Short-term actions should aim at increasing production. Over the longer term, we need to address the underlying policy and structural issues.

It is important that the framework for action have the ownership of the entire international community. For that to happen, there is a need for greater interaction and consultation between the High-Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis and Member States here at the United Nations and for a periodic review of the framework's implementation by the General Assembly. Since we have had very little time to analyse the proposed framework, we would like to give our views and input at the next possible opportunity.

The Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development to Review the Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus to be held in Doha and, before that, the General Assembly's high-level meeting on the MDGs will provide opportunities to address these challenges at the highest level. In that regard, we support the proposal of Chile, Egypt and Indonesia that food security and development be the main theme of the general debate of the sixty-third session, without prejudice to other issues on the global agenda.

Similarly, we look forward to a comprehensive and equitable approach to dealing with the problem of energy prices. We do not support the assumption that the rise in energy prices is due to a supply-demand gap. The price hike in energy is attributable to a host of factors. First, the immediate problem lies in refining capacity, not inadequate supply. The extra supply that the developed countries keep demanding from the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries can only come from sour crude. There is a lack of sufficient refining capacity even in the most industrialized economies. Refining is the bottleneck, not the supply of crude oil itself. Secondly, due to speculation, crude oil prices keep increasing, because the speculators are adding into the current prices the assumption that the world is going to run out of oil one day and that there are no additional reserves, thus discouraging further exploration. Thirdly, there is a doomsday security scenario for the oil-rich areas. Increasing rhetoric about imminent conflict and strikes in the Gulf, coupled with the problems in Nigeria and the Sudan, has been a major factor in pushing up the prices.

Some control mechanism and regulations are needed to moderate prices by curbing manipulative speculation. Speculation in fuel and food benefits only the speculators, hedge funds and traders who continuously test and push the markets to the limits. It is beneficial neither for the common man, nor for the economy.

There is an urgent need to provide balance-of-payment support to the developing countries, that are the most severely affected by the rising food and

energy prices. We urge the rich countries generously to support the developing countries in their balance-of-payment problems. The welcome initiative of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the generous $500-million contribution by His Majesty King Abdullah should be followed up by other steps to moderate prices and meet the financial needs of the affected developing countries.

The current financial crisis in the industrialized economies has critically exposed the vulnerabilities of a liberalized financial system. It has also highlighted the challenge facing the policymakers and regulators in an increasingly globalized, ever-changing world. The financial crisis will induce a slowdown in world trade and exert downward pressure on domestic development in most emerging markets, with varying impact depending on the country. If the current turbulence develops into a full-blown systemic financial crisis, with a large contraction in credit distribution in the major industrial economies and a lengthy painful period for the financial sector worldwide, there would be hugely negative consequences and decoupling would probably disappear under pressure from protectionism and financial transmission mechanisms.

Therefore, it is also important to prevent a major depressive impact on the economies of the South and to alleviate the undue burden being placed on the emerging markets of Asia to maintain growth in the world economy. Even as the real-estate and stock-market bubbles deflate in the major industrial economies, it is important to ensure that their adjustment response does not consist of resorting to new protectionism against the developing countries.

At the same time, it is all the more important now to ensure the implementation of the commitments undertaken significantly to increase official development assistance. We are disappointed that, despite the commitments made earlier in Monterrey at the world leaders' summit and in Gleneagles, official development assistance declined in 2006 and 2007.

Lastly, the two requirements most imperative to meeting the food and energy challenges are money and technology. The United Nations must take the lead in generating both. If it does not, poverty and despondency will grow, with potentially destabilizing effects on a large number of countries.

The challenges are huge, as should be our collective will and response. We cannot afford to falter any further on the agreed development commitments and goals. Procrastination and inaction will be catastrophic. We need to act, and to act now.

Mr. Muñoz (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): We welcome the convening of today's meeting to discuss the continuing and rapid rise in world food prices and the world energy crisis.

May I begin by reminding the Assembly that Egypt, Indonesia and Chile have suggested to the President-elect of the Assembly, Miguel d'Escoto, that the general debate of the sixty-third session of the General Assembly should focus precisely on the food crisis and development, without prejudice to other key issues on the world agenda.

The food crisis affects the international community as a whole and directly harms the most vulnerable and the poorest. Its potential global consequences, if not tackled with resolve, could become a major tragedy — a silent tsunami, as it has been described.

An important first step towards tackling the food crisis was the creation of the High-Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis, which advises the Secretary-General, and the recent holding of the High-Level Conference on World Food Security in Rome. In that regard, we wish to thank the members of the Task Force for the comprehensive framework for action, which provides guidelines for Governments, multilateral organizations and other stakeholders in dealing with the crisis. It is an important contribution, although we would have liked to have seen a clearer reference to the causal relationship, among others, between subsidies and trade-distorting practices in the developed countries and the current food crisis.

The apparent causes of the food crisis are related to the increased demand for food in countries with emerging economies, where growing sectors of the population are escaping poverty and consuming more; the adverse effects of climate change on agriculture; the soaring price of oil; the demand for alternative energy resources from certain farm crops; and the subsidies and other trade-distorting practices in international trade.

The global price of food commodities has risen by 83 per cent over the past 36 months, and it is estimated that 835 million people are affected by global food insecurity. The price of wheat has

increased by 130 per cent in the past year. Prices of dairy products have doubled since 2005. The World Bank has indicated that high food prices are a matter of daily struggle for 2 billion people, and that an additional 100 million people have been pushed into poverty in the past two years by the rise in the prices of foodstuffs.

In the case of oil, as is already known, the world has experienced a 96-per-cent increase over the past year, with the price per barrel having surpassed $145, almost double its price in June 2007. For every dollar rise in the price of oil, the operational costs of airlines, to cite one example, have increased by more than €1 billion.

The positive side of higher oil prices has been a certain rationalizing of consumption, stimulus for greater efficiency and investment in alternative energy sources. Investment in clean energy jumped from €21 billion in 2004 to almost €95.3 billion in 2007. It is no surprise that it was the shares of a solar energy company that showed the highest rise on the United States stock exchange last year, to the tune of 800 per cent.

The challenge for energy-dependent countries, such as Chile, which imports three quarters of its energy, is particularly acute. President Bachelet has decided to accelerate our efforts to diversify the energy matrix so as to minimize the adverse impacts of that vulnerability.

We should explore new ways to save energy and substantially increase the share of renewable sources in the total energy supply. We should recognize that Latin America is lagging behind other regions in improving energy efficiency, while we are working to coordinate energy-related initiatives within the framework of the recently established Union of South American Nations.

The progress in poverty reduction made by many developing countries is being wiped out by the inflation in food and energy prices, undermining their capacity to attain the Millennium Development Goals. As the dollar has shrunk in value, oil and commodities priced in dollars are going up, with serious inflationary effects in developing countries. In Chile, the food consumer price index rose almost 15 per cent towards the end of 2007, pushing up Chile's overall inflation rate. A similar trend is occurring in such countries as China, Mexico and Brazil, and in other countries of South Africa, as can be seen in a graph accompanying the written version of my statement.

The food crisis, as we have said before, could be a serious cause of social and political unrest. Therefore, first and foremost, immediate measures are needed to assist the most vulnerable countries and the populations most affected by high food prices. The World Bank estimates that poor countries will require about $6 billion a year in food aid since it is expected that prices are going to stabilize at high levels. Of those $6 billion, $3.5 billion will be needed for short-term safety net projects.

Secondly, like some previous speakers, we are concerned by speculative strategies that may be influencing the high level of food prices. The emerging famine is not a crisis in the global food supply. Markets are replete with foodstuffs, but the problem is that consumers in developing countries cannot buy them because of their high prices.

Thirdly, in the longer term a new boost must be given to agriculture, promoting greater investment in scientific and technological research, infrastructure and access to fertilizers, and ensuring the free flow of scientific and technological know-how to the developing countries.

Fourthly, we must optimize the planet's agricultural potential, and that can be done only by eliminating all the agricultural subsidies and other market-distorting mechanisms that are adversely affecting the developing world. We need clear and fair rules that will enable the developing world to compete on an equal footing and to achieve greater levels of prosperity. Chile resolutely supports the idea that the Doha Round should include a debate on the rise in food prices and its impact on the poorest countries and on the negotiations for the liberalization of world trade, as well as the need to find a solution to the problem.

Lastly, rising food costs will exacerbate world hunger. According to one estimate, the number of malnourished people will rise from 860 million in 2006 to 1.2 billion in 2017 unless we act more forcefully. We therefore attach importance to such measures as the Latin America and the Caribbean without Hunger Initiative of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, and the initiative to fight hunger and poverty launched initially by Brazil, France and Chile, which are already bearing fruit through the

International Drug Purchase Facility, to which Chile has contributed considerable financial resources.

To sum up, we must act swiftly to address a food and energy crisis that will not disappear of its own accord. On the contrary, the two-fold crisis will worsen if we do not take timely action. Chile is prepared to support specific actions in the quest for a coordinated solution to a crisis that affects all of us without exception, but which especially harms the weakest and poorest, who deserve all our support.

Mrs. Tobing (Indonesia): Mr. President, allow me, first of all, to congratulate you on your initiative in convening this meeting. I should also like to express my appreciation to the Secretary-General for the briefing on the global food and energy crisis and the presentation on the High-Level Task Force's revised comprehensive framework for action.

I would also like to associate myself fully with the statement made by the representative of Antigua and Barbuda on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

The global crisis we are facing today is arguably the worst food and energy situation the world has seen since the early 1970s. The crisis has already had dire socio-economic and political consequences for many countries and threatens global economic stability. Against that backdrop, we call on the international community to take concerted and sustained action to address the food crisis. It is therefore our conviction that the General Assembly should provide the international community with leadership and guidance and shepherd our global efforts at addressing the crisis.

We fully recognize that the primary responsibility for development falls within national boundaries. However, with the food crisis and slowing global economy, it has become virtually impossible for developing countries to achieve their development targets and commitments, including the Millennium Development Goals.

Although the situation looks difficult, we are confident that it is still manageable. Several international efforts have helped to address the crisis, such as the Secretary-General's initiative on the High-Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis, the High-Level Conference on Food Security of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, and the recent Group of Eight summit. They all have reached a common conclusion that the world needs to boost food production. The efforts undertaken could be likened to the Green Revolution that was so successful in the 1960s, but this time around, they need massive investment and an active global partnership.

Furthermore, a revitalization of the agricultural sector, including in developing countries, still provides new opportunities. With today's knowledge and technologies, agricultural revitalization can go a step further. We can both address poverty and create sustainable crop production while also doing environmentally friendly agricultural intensification.

To that end, the role of developed countries is important. They in particular need to increase the flow of investment, share their experience and transfer technology for food production in order to support developing countries' agricultural sectors. It is also important for developed countries to use their aid and trade policies to boost agriculture production in developing countries.

On the part of developing countries, the agricultural sector needs to be better mainstreamed into the national development agenda. The recent Declaration of the High-Level Conference on World Food Security: The Challenges of Climate Change and Bioenergy, which took place in Rome, and High-Level Task Force's comprehensive framework for action provide an array of plans and policy options that can help revitalize agriculture sectors at the national level.

The role of the private sector needs to be emphasized in helping reverse the trend of declining investments and cooperation in agriculture. Governments, the private sector and the research community must actively interlink and engage. In that context, a framework for an active global partnership on food security that is ambitious, comprehensive and inclusive could be established.

We welcome the revised comprehensive framework for action introduced by the Secretary-General. We believe that the elaboration of the section on how to achieve the framework outcome is indeed important. Furthermore, the additional emphasis on partnerships at the country, regional and global levels is also important in ensuring the effective implementation of the framework.

However, we have observed that the framework remains silent on the costs of implementing plans or policies proposed on its menu. We understand that the

framework is not an investment programme. Nevertheless, an indication or projection of implementation costs would provide valuable insight.

The international community has yet to develop a global follow-up or a monitoring system to evaluate the implementation and effectiveness of the various suggested plans and policy options for addressing the crisis. We believe that it would be highly valuable to establish such a global follow-up or a monitoring system. Establishing targets and a time frame in which we can expect to see results should be part of the system.

Mr. Hannesson (Iceland), Vice-President, took the Chair.

It must be emphasized that it is important for the long-term focus to be on improving global food security. In that context, we feel the General Assembly can play a leading role. The Assembly should be able to monitor and evaluate the global progress and effectiveness of the various efforts to address the global food crisis and to improve global food security. It is for that reason that Indonesia, together with Chile and Egypt, has proposed the issue of food security and development as the theme for the sixty-third session of the General Assembly. That could perhaps open the way for the Assembly to take more concrete action on food security.

It is important for us also to highlight the fact that the global food crisis did not occur overnight; the upward trend in the prices of agricultural commodities began in 2006. In addition, there have long been analyses and predictions regarding an imminent global food security crisis. The fact that the international community did not take more serious notice of those signals highlights the urgency of establishing a global system to better monitor food security.

If we are to be better prepared, we believe it is important that the United Nations enhance its capacity to anticipate and avert the recurrence of such crises in the future. The United Nations, together with other relevant bodies, needs to develop a better system to monitor and report on the status of the global supply and demand for food and the status of global food prices — a system that can act as an early warning system for global food insecurity.

In addition, it may be useful to have a system in place that can quickly stabilize supply shortages of staple food commodities on a short-term basis. That could be particularly useful in times of disasters and other food security emergencies. We in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) have existing mechanisms in place, such as the ASEAN Food Security Reserve Board; the East Asia Emergency Rice Reserve, comprising the ASEAN countries plus China, Japan and the Republic of Korea; and the ASEAN Food Security Information System. It could be useful to develop similar mechanisms in other regions or at the global level.

Mr. Christian (Ghana): I join previous speakers in thanking the President of the General Assembly for organizing this meeting. We also express our appreciation to the Secretary-General for his statement and take this opportunity to reaffirm Ghana's deep appreciation for his leadership in fashioning an international response to the formidable challenges posed by climate change, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the unfolding food and energy crisis.

Ghana associates itself with the statements made by the representative of Antigua and Barbuda on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and by the representative of Ethiopia on behalf of the Group of African States.

Ghana fully shares the Secretary-General's sense of urgency regarding the need for prompt action to prevent a rollback of the modest progress recently recorded among many developing countries. The prospect of an estimated 100 million more people joining the ranks of the 854 million chronically undernourished worldwide is deeply troubling, to say the least. We hope that that fear will not materialize, and we fully endorse the call for immediate humanitarian relief for those facing hunger and malnutrition.

Ghana therefore welcomes the updated version of the comprehensive framework for action and commends the High-Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis for its hard work and wisdom. We are particularly pleased to note that that document has shed further light on the range of tools and resources that could be harnessed at the national, regional and international levels to achieve lasting food and nutrition security.

The very composition of the High-Level Task Force is a reflection of the sophistication and high degree of political, financial and technological power

that currently reposes in the intergovernmental system. Better still, that immense power could be infinitely augmented if we were to draw on the knowledge, experience and energy of the civil society groups that have tirelessly and repeatedly sounded the alarm about the dangers inherent in the prevailing imbalances in the world system and the threats that they pose to the human family at large.

In saying that, my delegation is all too mindful of the fact that opinions vary, both in official and in non-official circles, as to the root causes of the current food and energy crisis and what the most appropriate responses should be in those circumstances. As the framework itself notes, soaring food prices are the cumulative effect of long-term trends, including changing supply and demand factors.

Nonetheless, we must be prepared to acknowledge those past policy failures and other persistent problems relating to agricultural trade, biofuels and food market volatilities that have systematically undermined the productivity of the agricultural sectors on which most developing countries, including Ghana, have traditionally relied for food and income.

At the same time, let me hasten to add that it is neither prudent nor safe to allow differences of opinion on essentially complex issues to weaken our resolve to act expeditiously to contain a crisis that could profoundly destabilize many if not all countries, with far-reaching consequences.

To my delegation, therefore, it has become clearer than ever before that food and nutrition security raises strategic questions that ought to redefine the global partnership necessary to address the triple challenge of climate change, the MDGs and the food and energy crisis.

One principle that should guide such a new partnership is that Governments must enjoy the policy space required to make decisions and adopt programmes that work best in their peculiar national circumstances, as demonstrated by Malawi, whose successes in the agricultural sector are indeed a source of pride and inspiration for Ghana.

In that connection, Ghana is pleased that the comprehensive framework for action has recognized the practical usefulness of offering what the report describes as "a menu of policies and actions" that will allow Governments, civil society, the rural poor and smallholder farmers to assume their rightful roles, with the support of the donor community and in accordance with national priorities. Furthermore, it is our fervent hope that the rich ideas contained in the framework will provide a useful backdrop for the discussions that will take place in the coming months at the various conferences that will precede the World Summit in Copenhagen next year.

Finally, Ghana looks forward to working with our counterparts in our subregional and regional institutions and within agreed frameworks, such as the New Partnership for Africa's Development and the MDGs, to advance our shared objectives.

Ms. Espinosa (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): Permit me at the outset to associate myself with the statement made by the representative of Antigua and Barbuda on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. My delegation congratulates the President of the General Assembly on having convened this important debate on the food and energy crisis, which is a matter of priority for Ecuador.

We appreciate the comprehensive approach of the comprehensive framework for action presented to us today, since it addresses the problem in all its complexity and emphasizes the relationship among the food crisis, the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and climate change. We also appreciate the fact that the framework is a flexible tool enabling each country to utilize it in accordance with its specific conditions and needs.

However, our delegation believes that the framework requires more detailed analysis, which my delegation has not been able to provide, having received it only a short time ago. However, we would, of course, be interested in doing so at a future meeting.

The food crisis that we are experiencing is the consequence of the unsound actions, policies and measures of a number of Governments, which have caused a global price escalation and food shortage. Among the causes of the crisis, we must mention the harmful policy of agricultural subsidies maintained by many developed countries, which cause serious distortions and compel developing countries that used to be food producers to dismantle their agricultural production in order to become importers. That policy of subsidies practised by the developed countries is echoed in their lack of political will to conclude the

negotiations on agricultural products in the Doha Round, which has meant that many of the foodstuffs produced in developing countries cannot reach international markets.

The food crisis has prompted several Latin American countries to sign the Managua declaration of the Presidential Summit on Sovereignty and Food Security: Food for life, in which we recognize the sovereign right of countries to food security and pledge to support State and private investment in sustainable food production. We acknowledge the need to implement policies and programmes in a coordinated fashion through South-South cooperation mechanisms with a view to stepping up food production on the basis of sustainability and respect for the environment.

Ecuador is one of the 12 most diverse countries of the planet. Its diversity of biological resources, crops and climates directly benefits every aspect of our food production. That is why my Government has developed a comprehensive strategy to address the crisis and is in the process of implementing an agricultural and livestock sector reinvigoration plan aimed at bolstering the production of foodstuffs, promoting development in rural agricultural communities, stimulating public and private productive investment, boosting competitiveness and protecting natural resources and biodiversity. In implementing the plan, Ecuador hopes to create its own food reserve.

It is clear that we cannot leave the right to food to the mercy of the market. Upholding that right must be the responsibility of the international community and the result of the political will of the States and organizations of our system to progress towards development paradigms predicated on the well-being of human beings and not on growth as an end in itself. We believe that the problem of the world food crisis is one that can be resolved not through donations of food to developing countries, but through the adoption of State policies that commit countries to cooperating with each other, fostering investment to improve agricultural production, establishing a consensus that will allow for fair market access to foodstuffs and recognizing the right of States to their food sovereignty.

We could undertake endless analyses of magic formulas for a solution based on immediate humanitarian assistance, increased agricultural investments or the necessary macroeconomic adjustments, and it is true that we must act on all levels and in an urgent fashion. However, the crisis we are experiencing today will recur or will be perpetuated if we do not rethink current production and consumption paradigms. It is imperative that we work together for the sake of a new development ethic.

Mr. Sergeyev (Ukraine): My delegation extends our gratitude to General Assembly President Kerim for convening this important meeting. I would like to indicate that Ukraine aligns itself with the statement made earlier by the delegation of France on behalf of the European Union. I would therefore like to touch upon some issues that are of specific interest to my country and relevant to the theme of today's deliberations.

At the outset, I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his address to the Assembly today and for submitting to Member States the revised version of the comprehensive framework for action.

The need for global development cooperation for food safety is extremely acute and urgent in the context of achieving the goals of the Millennium Declaration. We all agree that the human right to food is the greatest fundamental value and the basis of international relations in the twenty-first century.

Ukraine supports the measures taken by the organizations and agencies of the United Nations system under the leadership of the Secretary-General, particularly the establishment of the High-Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis.

We consider today's meeting to be an important step in the process of the further elaboration of a coordinated and comprehensive plan of action directed towards overcoming the crisis. Undoubtedly, it will become the most important stage in the decision-making process; it will add new elements to those discussed during the recent session of the Commission on Sustainable Development and the Special Meeting of the Economic and Social Council on the global food crisis. That process will be continued during the Economic and Social Council's high-level event on the Millennium Development Goals and the General Assembly's high-level meeting on the implementation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development, both to be held in September, as well as at the Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development to Review the Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus to be held later this year.

We hope that the problem of the food crisis and development will be the focus of the upcoming sixty-third session of the General Assembly. At this point, we would like to express support for the initiative of Egypt, Chile and Indonesia outlined in their letter addressed to the President-elect of the General Assembly.

Ukraine will strongly support the United Nations initiatives focused on fighting global poverty and famine and on increasing food production capacities. Ukraine, which lost millions of people as a result of the man-made famine of 1932 and 1933 — the Holodomor — understands the necessity of timely aid and food distribution.

As one of the biggest producers of grain, Ukraine has extensive experience in providing food assistance to countries in need. We recently sent aid to Myanmar, Tajikistan and certain African States. On a bilateral level, those humanitarian supplies are being delivered effectively and in a timely manner because of a lack of bureaucracy.

We are willing to act as donors in the context of the ambitious mechanism proposed by the Task Force. We expect that mechanism to be effective, transparent, less expensive and less bureaucratic. We hope that the comprehensive framework for action will create a system to deal with the urgent situation and aimed at creating medium- and long-term mechanisms to help countries in permanent crisis to make their economies capable of coping with food challenges.

The global food situation calls for a strong commitment from Governments and all other stakeholders. We stress the importance of the effective and efficient use of the resources of the United Nations system and other relevant international organizations. We are convinced that we should work at all levels within the United Nations framework to develop mechanisms for coordinated action aimed at reducing hunger and poverty in the world.

I am confident that a further deepening of our cooperation on food will be extremely helpful to our efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

Mr. Soler Torrijos (Panama) (*spoke in Spanish*): First and foremost, I wish to congratulate the President of the General Assembly on taking this initiative. The two issues before us are closely related to each other and to the ominous issue of climate change. The food and climate change issues are largely the consequence of the energy issue.

My delegation welcomes the initiatives that have been undertaken to address the situation within the United Nations and other forums. I take the floor to address the complexity of the current situation.

As we all know, oil prices continue to rise because of four concomitant factors. First, world demand continues to rise, together with the shortage of new oil fields and of capacity to refine heavy crude oil, which will continue to restrict supply. Secondly, there are conflicts in major oil extraction areas. Thirdly, there are important speculative components to the increase in the price of crude and refined products, which exacerbates the situation. Fourthly, the dollar is weak.

The disproportionate increase in demand is outstripping that which can be attributed to an increase in world population and industrialization. Indeed, much of the increase stems from the spendthrift consumption patterns of the most industrialized countries. Likewise, conflicts in some of the main oil reserve areas compound the speculative component, which enriches a few while devastating the bulk of humanity.

Thus, on the one hand, this consumption pattern and the hegemonistic use of fossil fuels generate environmental pollution and climate instability to the detriment of agriculture. On the other hand, the price of hydrocarbons is increasing the cost of agricultural products, causing an increase in both the prices of inputs, such as fertilizers and pesticides, and the costs of processing and transportation of such products.

Developing countries need affordable, renewable and clean energy sources that are not likely to become more expensive or to jeopardize the environment. In turn, there is an urgent need to increase the production and supply of healthy and affordable foodstuffs to a growing population whose food security must be safeguarded. The need for greater food production arises not just from poverty, but also from progress; no sooner are more jobs and decent incomes available than the population naturally demands better food, as is its legitimate right.

For its part, the exorbitant cost of hydrocarbons stimulates demand for and production of agricultural biofuels. One sector of agriculture has always provided

raw materials to industry, but that is now being supplemented by the additional use of agricultural lands. That option is welcome so long as it makes it possible to exploit impoverished or fallow soils without reducing the production of food or affecting forest reserves, since it helps to reduce our dependence on oil and contributes to the development of rural areas.

All of the foregoing is ample reason for the demand that those problems be discussed in a timely and serious manner in the United Nations and other competent international bodies, because this is a matter that unjustly impairs national economies and the lives of our peoples, especially the economies and populations of developing countries that, like our own, do not produce hydrocarbons — in other words, those that constitute the bulk of humankind.

The problem is so grave that its discussion can be neither deferred nor prolonged without practical outcome. In the strictest sense of the term, the prices of oil and its derivatives, as well as their affect on the costs and supply of foodstuffs, already constitute a threat to international peace and security. Accordingly, the United Nations must continue to tackle that issue as a matter of urgent priority.

Mr. Mbuende (Namibia): My delegation wishes to express its gratitude to the President of the General Assembly for organizing this meeting to exchange views on the current global food and energy crisis that is threatening to push many households back into poverty. The meeting is timely, coming as it does on the heels of the Rome summit on 3 June 2008 and the establishment by the Secretary-General of a Task Force to deliberate on the crisis.

We thank the Secretary-General and his team for the comprehensive framework for action. We associate ourselves with the statements made by the representatives of Antigua and Barbuda and Ethiopia, who spoke on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and the Group of African States, respectively.

The current global food and energy crisis comes at a time when we are halfway to the target for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). This is a time when the international community is supposed to intensify its efforts to support developing countries in achieving the MDGs. However, the current skyrocketing prices of basic foodstuffs have left many households unable to place food on the table. The situation, which is also being worsened by high oil prices and harsh weather conditions as the result of climate change, threatens to reverse our gains vis-à-vis the achievement of the first MDG. The crisis could even develop into a threat to international peace and stability; as the saying goes, a hungry man is an angry man.

Namibia, as a net importer of both food and oil, has been hit hard by the crisis. The prices of both food and petrol have more than doubled in the past six months. On the other hand, local food production has been affected by extreme weather conditions. For instance, for the 2008-2009 marketing season, our domestic food requirement is estimated to be 309,000 tons, while our output is forecast to be only 125,000 tons, or less than 50 per cent of our requirements, which translates into a deficit of about 184,000 tons. We are therefore alarmed by the news that a number of food-producing countries around the world have already put in place mechanisms to restrict food exports, while some of their citizens are hoarding food in order to artificially influence the market. In that regard, while the General Assembly should call on Governments to scale up their investment in agriculture and increase productivity, it should also discourage the practice of hoarding food.

The Assembly should also call on international financial institutions to increase their lending for agriculture. However, we are of the view that increasing productivity constitutes an uphill battle because of high oil prices. The prices of all agricultural inputs, such as fertilizers, machinery and transport, have been increasing substantially, with a negative effect on the prices of products.

While we welcome all emergency measures to save the lives of those who are being directly threatened by the crisis, we also advocate the search for and adoption of long-term solutions. In that regard, our Government has taken a number of measures to increase agricultural productivity, taking into account our country's unique situation. Those measures include the Green Scheme programme, which promotes the development of irrigated agronomic production aimed at increasing the contribution of agriculture to the country's gross national product and at achieving a high degree of social development, uplifting those communities located within the suitable irrigation areas. Our agricultural production, marketing and processing initiative, through which the Government

strives to increase the local production, marketing and processing of fruits, vegetables, livestock fodder and other agricultural products, is aimed at lessening our dependence on imports and promoting added value. Our Government has also invested in the construction of strategic storage facilities to minimize shortages in the future.

Other measures to boost agricultural production are the subsidization of agricultural inputs, such as ploughing services and the provision of fertilizers and quality seeds for small-scale farmers. Agricultural extension services have also been decentralized in order to make them easily accessible to farmers. I must, however, hasten to state that increasing food and oil prices are also attributable to speculation on the commodities markets. If nothing is done to address the situation, we will soon be faced with a situation similar to that of the sub-prime mortgage crisis.

The current food crisis is not primarily an agricultural issue. It is the product of many determinants, the bulk of which are man-made. Indeed, it is symptomatic of the instability of the global economy. The global economic and financial institutions are not in a position to perform the task for which they were created. We need to reform those institutions, lest we be subjected to crisis after crisis.

Mr. Benmellouk (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): I should like at the outset to thank the President for convening this meeting on food security, an issue that challenges us to act swiftly to save millions of people from hunger and malnutrition. I should also like to welcome the Secretary-General's initiative to report to us regularly on the measures taken by the United Nations to address the food crisis. I thank him for his detailed briefing on the comprehensive framework for action prepared by the High-Level Task Force. The report presented today shows the scope of the crisis and the importance of the coordination and collaboration efforts undertaken by members of the United Nations family.

Today, the world must face a threefold challenge: the escalations in the prices of food staples and energy products and the effects of climate change being felt throughout the world, sparing neither developed nor developing countries. However, it is the South that will be most affected. Indeed, the conjunction of those threats could bring to naught the efforts and progress made in combating hunger and poverty.

The report of the High-Level Task Force indicates that more than 850 million of the world's inhabitants suffer from hunger. The recent staggering rise in the prices of food products threatens to push another 100 million into the chasm of hunger and poverty. Thus, the objective of achieving the Millennium Development Goals before 2015 will be even more difficult to attain. The report also indicates that the crisis will worsen over the next six months. Hence, it is urgent to act in a coordinated and united manner.

It is essential to take urgent measures to attack the underlying causes of the current situation, which range from speculation on international markets to the effects of the agricultural subsidies provided by developed countries, and include the ineffectiveness of national policies, the decline in official development assistance for the agricultural sector, the rise in energy prices and, above all, global warming and its effects on agricultural production.

The current situation offers an opportunity for the international community to rethink the policies that have been in place and to strengthen links of cooperation in order to act collectively through short- and medium-term measures to deal with the crises.

The challenge posed by the food crisis requires a massive investment in agriculture and water conservation. Africa, which has significant potential, must be assisted and supported financially, technically and scientifically so that it can carry out its green revolution and feed its population.

However, agricultural policies in Africa cannot succeed without the significant reduction and eventual elimination of the agricultural subsidies provided by the developed countries. The members of the World Trade Organization should strive to conclude the Doha Round of negotiations in order to eliminate obstacles to international trade.

The United Nations system and the international financial institutions should coordinate their activities to aid the most vulnerable populations and should adapt their support to the needs of each region and country. The High-Level Task Force established by the Secretary-General should play a critical role in that regard.

It is also crucial to reverse the downward trend in official development assistance, particularly that to the agricultural sector, which, unfortunately, has continued

to decline. In that regard, we welcome the measures taken at the Group of Eight summit and the initiative of the European Union, as well as the funds announced by other States.

Finally, responding to the triple threat represented by the escalations in food and energy products and the effects of climate change requires international solidarity to meet the immediate needs of the most vulnerable, as well as the determination and political will to find lasting solutions to those crises.

Mr. Cancela (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): Uruguay associates itself with the statement made by the delegation of Antigua and Barbuda on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. We welcome the initiative to organize this meeting and to invite the Secretary-General to brief the General Assembly on the revised comprehensive framework for action developed by the High-Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis.

In addition, given the gravity and urgency of the problems we face, our country stresses the importance of keeping Member States informed about and involved in this process. Uruguay recognizes the valuable report introduced by the Secretary-General, the document submitted and the reports previously presented on the food crisis, as well as the initiatives adopted within the framework of the United Nations.

The comprehensive framework for action contains important statements and policy guidelines for overcoming the current crisis and is an important contribution to the search for solutions to the serious problems related to the food and energy crisis and the problems linked to climate change. Uruguay values that contribution. While we point to the need for a more detailed reading of the document, we wish to highlight a number of elements that we consider to be essential in the search for lasting solutions to the current situation.

Our country belongs to a region that is a major producer of food of great variety and that also has vast reserves of both non-renewable and renewable energy resources. That allows Latin America to contribute to the search for solutions to resolve the grave crisis affecting us.

However, if we are to find a sustainable and lasting solution, we must address the structural factors that have created the crisis. Undoubtedly, correcting the distortions caused by the multilateral trade system, in particular agricultural trade, will be decisive in ensuring the availability of abundant food to meet the needs of the entire world population.

In that connection, the Uruguay Round of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade represented an important step forward because agricultural trade was included for the first time in the multilateral trade agreements. However, we are still far from having achieved just, equitable and efficient agricultural trade.

For decades, international trade was characterized by relatively low food prices. It was theorized that some countries were producing food at increasingly lower prices, while others were making increasingly expensive industrial and technological products. As a result of many factors, the situation has changed; the rise in food prices has accelerated and, regrettably, caused a severe food crisis in many countries and strong inflationary pressures in others.

Uruguay believes that, while urgent measures must be taken to address the grave crisis before us, it is equally essential that there be a successful conclusion to the Doha Round, in particular its agricultural track, in order to guarantee global food security. In that connection, only a reduction in tariffs, the elimination of export subsidies and non-tariff restrictions, and a significant reduction in the internal assistance measures of developed countries, with their distorting effects on production and trade, will result in a more just, equitable and efficient world agricultural market. In that way, efficient producer countries will have the necessary guarantees for investments to ensure a considerable increase in world production and exportable supply.

Uruguay calls upon all countries, especially developed countries, to step up their efforts to reach an agreement that will make agricultural trade fairer, freer and more efficient. That means open markets and not protectionist markets, which would indeed bring about an increase in world production, a fall in prices and greater access to food for the world's population.

In addition, Uruguay believes it is necessary to stress the need for cooperation by the developed world to achieve a new generation of technology to intensify agricultural production that is economically and socially sustainable and resilient to climate change. We also stress the need for research to stem the ongoing loss of fresh water and soil resources for food

production in the future. In that respect, it is worth noting that access to and the transfer of technology are indispensable to increase world food production.

In conclusion, we would refer to the production of bio-energy and biofuels, that offers development opportunities to rural populations, who could find new sources of income in that area. However, we are aware of the risks involved for food security. That is why we believe that research and technical assistance are essential, in order to make the best of the opportunities for that type of agricultural production without compromising food security and the environment. Applying appropriate policies in producer countries while taking into account their specific characteristics will also allow us to reduce the risks associated with biofuel crops.

The severity and urgency of the crisis do not allow us any time to hesitate, and it is the responsibility of the international community to find speedy solutions that can mitigate its effects. If we do not also address structural problems, however, there will be no lasting solutions. In that regard, the liberalization of agricultural trade, access to and transfer of technology and research are absolutely necessary to increase world food production and ensure that food reaches those who need it most.

Mr. Al-Hadhrami (Yemen) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank the President of the Assembly for convening this meeting to take up a very important question. I would also like to express the support of my delegation for the statement made by the representative of Antigua and Barbuda on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, in which he shed light on the world food and energy crisis.

The unprecedented rise in the price of fuel, the recourse to biofuels, the decrease of investment in agriculture, accelerated demand for food, the depletion of the world's food reserves and concerns regarding climate change today are among the most important factors affecting the global food security crisis, which in turn will compromise the progress achieved in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) over the past few years. As indicated in the report of the World Bank, the food crisis will undermine the living conditions of millions of people around the world.

My country welcomes the establishment of the High-Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis, led by the Secretary-General and consisting of the heads of the specialized agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations, the Bretton Woods institutions and relevant departments of the Secretariat, aimed at promoting a unified response to the challenge of rising world food prices, including the facilitation of a priority plan of action. My delegation has also studied the Declaration of the High-Level Conference on World Food Security, entitled "The Challenges of Climate Change and Bioenergy", issued on 5 June 2008 in Rome. My country was represented there by a high-level delegation led by our Prime Minister, Mr. Ali Mohammed Mujawar. The Conference enjoyed the participation of the ministers and representatives of 180 countries. The participants renewed their commitments to the objectives of the World Food Summit and the MDGs in order to take short-, medium- and long-term measures to limit the suffering from the present crisis and to stimulate the production of food and increased investment in agriculture.

The Republic of Yemen, in cooperation with donor countries and organizations, has embarked on administrative, financial and economic reforms and the preparation of a poverty reduction strategy, with the wide participation of the provinces, civil society organizations and the private sector. The strategy was endorsed by the Government on 4 June 2002. In that context, we would like international and regional organizations and other donor States to support the strategy in order to further the implementation of the MDGs. My Government has also decided to merge the five-year development plan and poverty reduction strategy into one document and link it to the implementation of the MDGs, taking 2005 as the starting point for the merger. It will also consolidate efforts made during the preparatory phase for the third five-year plan for development and poverty reduction for the period 2006 to 2010.

In conclusion, my delegation extends its sincere thanks and appreciation to all of those partners who contribute to development in Yemen. We renew our call to participate in resolving the grave world food crisis, which is a universal responsibility, to overcome key impediments to access to food and to contribute to the optimum sustainable exploitation of world resources, which is in our interests and in those of posterity.

Mr. Sen (India): I thank General Assembly President Kerim for convening this plenary meeting on

a topic that continues to present unprecedented challenges to all, particularly developing countries.

At the outset, allow me to emphasize the appropriateness of dealing with the food and energy crises together in an integrated manner. The sharp escalation in global oil prices has played a significant role in increasing input costs and in promoting biofuels, and both the energy and food crises have contributed significantly to inflation. I may add that it would have been even more useful today also to consider the third crisis — the global financial crisis, which is posing its interrelated challenges to our development efforts. Any meaningful response must address all three of those issues.

I thank the Secretary-General for providing the revised version of the comprehensive framework for action, produced by his High-Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis, and for his briefing here this morning. We are in the process of studying that voluminous document in detail, as it was made available only a couple of days ago. At this stage, therefore, I will only make a few preliminary comments on the document.

The comprehensive framework for action represents the consensus view of the United Nations system on how to respond to the global food crisis. Some actions suggested in the framework for action are important and need to be implemented. However, the framework includes minimal, if any, contribution by Member States, which bear the primary burden in addressing the crisis and which, as acknowledged in the framework document itself, are at the centre of the response. In short, they are asked to implement something that they did not formulate, thereby making the efforts of the poor rather similar to the charge of the Light Brigade: theirs was not to question why; theirs was but to do or die. Of course, in this case we can question — and we shall.

Let me reiterate that the content of the framework would have been enriched and made easier to implement if the ideas and suggestions of Member States had been taken on board. I note that the framework proposes regular consultations with, inter alia, Member States. I am also encouraged that it does not seek to prescribe specific policies and activities, but rather provides a range of options from which choices can be made. Nevertheless, the overall thrust of the document appears to list options that Member States and others should implement without being part of the process of their elaboration.

The comprehensive framework for action also presents the food crisis as a threat and an opportunity. While every crisis can be considered an opportunity to build anew, and while enhanced food prices may result in improved returns for farmers, it would be unfortunate to present the desperation of millions of vulnerable people in their struggle to feed themselves as an opportunity.

Even on the substance of the recommendations, some key lacunae must be pointed out. It is clear that the agricultural productive capacity of developing countries has been systematically undermined over time through astronomical agricultural subsidies in developed countries, combined with pressure on developing countries to lower their tariffs and the harmful prescriptive advice from the Bretton Woods institutions to indiscriminately shift away from food crops for the domestic population to cash crops for export, which has been devastating for food security. Unfortunately, the comprehensive framework for action continues to make that recommendation in the context of high food prices. Logically, that is topsy-turvy, because it means that the countries concerned are to eliminate food insecurity through the very measures that have, at least partially, contributed to that insecurity.

It is good that the right to food has been recognized in the comprehensive framework for action; we would have hoped for better recommendations to ensure its realization. We would also have hoped that high food prices would have given the necessary impetus to developed countries for eliminating agricultural subsidies. In 2005, the agricultural subsidies of the countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development amounted to $385.2 billion, while in the World Trade Organization those very countries induced developing countries to eliminate duties and barriers and expose their agriculture to this flood of subsidies. The developing countries' argument of food security was downplayed then. The very same argument is being used by the developed countries now. Earlier, low food prices justified the subsidies of the rich. Today, high food prices are used to justify them. Heads I win; tails you lose: that is how one squares the circle.

The issue of biofuels has also been addressed incorrectly or has been hidden in the rather coy generalities of "recent supply and demand dynamics". The key difference between food-grain-based biofuels and non-food-grain-based ones has been glossed over. Even if we decided to convert all the world's grain into biofuel, fossil fuels would still be required and we would not be left with anything to eat. In such a scenario, the diversion to biofuel production of land on which cereal for human consumption is grown is self-defeating. This morning, the President of the General Assembly said that increasing demand from emerging economies was one of the causes of supply-demand tension. The comprehensive framework for action does not mention this. Nor does the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

In fact, Mr. Kerim cited the International Monetary Fund several times, but he did not quote the recent World Bank report by the Bank's senior economist Don Mitchell, who has done a detailed month-by-month analysis of food price inflation, and has concluded that "Rapid income growth in developing countries has not led to large increases in global grain consumption and was not a major factor responsible for the large price increases". He has even discounted successive droughts in Australia. He concludes that "without the increase in biofuels, global wheat and maize stocks would not have declined appreciably and price increases due to other factors would have been moderate" and that higher energy and fertilizer prices accounted for an increase of 15 per cent, while biofuels have been responsible for a 75 per cent increase between 2002 and February 2008.

My attention was drawn to that report by the representative of the Caribbean Community, and I thank him for that. The report finds that biofuels production has distorted food markets by diverting grain away from food to fuel — a third of United States corn and half of European Union vegetable oils; taking away land for biofuel production; and sparking financial speculation in food grains. The comprehensive framework for action here inverts the facts when it calls speculation a consequence of food export restrictions, when these restrictions are clearly a consequence of the inflation fuelled partly by speculation. Incidentally, the report finds that Brazilian biofuels, derived from sugar cane, have not had such an impact.

Also missing from the framework is any meaningful reference to technology. Agricultural research and development and the transfer of new technology to farmers are crucial to enhance global food production as well as to address possible climate change impact on agriculture. In that regard, addressing the trade-related aspects of intellectual property rights (TRIPS) is essential to avoid monopolistic pricing of agricultural inputs, and institutions such as the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research must be supported. At the time of the Green Revolution, intellectual property rights for seeds were in the public domain. Today, thanks to the TRIPS Agreement, they are in the private domain.

Incidentally, the framework also talks of addressing climate change, the Millennium Development Goals and the food crisis holistically. Yet there is no recognition that biofuels represent an implicit carbon tax that actually falls disproportionately on the poor. The developed world's emissions amount to its having enjoyed an environmental subsidy for the past 200 years, continued through biofuel and agricultural subsidies. The intellectual property rights regime is actually an engine for transferring income from the developing to the developed world.

The comprehensive framework for action appears to treat short-term response measures by various countries from a unidimensional perspective. Yet such measures have ensured food security for millions and there has been commodity price stabilization, as acknowledged in the framework. Logically, the matter is straightforward. The framework's analysis of causes is not optimal in terms of their relative importance and balance. Therefore, its recommendations cannot be optimal in terms of relative priorities.

However, I would like to support some specific recommendations in the comprehensive framework for action, on nutrition intervention, school feeding programmes, enhanced safety nets, boosts to smallholder farmer production, investment in rural and agricultural infrastructure as well as reduction in post-harvest crop losses. These are among the measures that India has been advocating and implementing itself.

Despite its shortcomings, to which I have referred, the comprehensive framework for action at least represents an effort to address a pressing global

issue. However, no such global effort is visible when it comes to addressing the energy crisis. Over the past two years, oil demand has increased by 1 per cent annually, but prices in dollar terms have increased by 90 per cent. That actually amounts to a levy imposed by companies outside our tax jurisdiction — something we cannot tax away. Those high prices will eventually mean import compression that will have a negative impact on gross domestic product. It is time to take concerted global action now to address this crisis if we are to ensure that limited development gains are not lost.

Let me conclude on a positive note. India has been feeding 17 per cent of the world's population on less than 5 per cent of the world's water and 3 per cent of its arable land. Over a period of time, we have taken several measures to further increase agricultural output and food security. The latest estimates indicate that India will have a record harvest for the agricultural year 2007-08, thereby continuing the self-sufficiency in food grains that we have enjoyed since the late 1960s thanks to the Green Revolution. That experience gives us confidence that current global challenges can be met. But that requires genuine cooperation and concerted action at the global level.

Mrs. Juul (Norway): The rising prices of food and energy constitute a growing problem, in particular for the most vulnerable. We believe that, in the long term, high food prices could be a source of income in developing countries and that high energy prices could be a catalyst for innovation and for greater emphasis on the use of alternative, clean energy. But as we have seen over the past few months, an increased risk of hunger also means an increased risk of violence, crime and social unrest.

Combined with the challenges arising from climate change, the global food security situation calls for a strong commitment from all stakeholders to work together to achieve the objectives of the World Food Summit. Climate change is perhaps the greatest threat to food security. If we fail to place combating climate change at the very top of our food security agenda, we will be seriously neglecting our responsibility. Our efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions will help us in the long term, but not immediately. In the meantime, adaptation to climate change is paramount.

We must also balance short- and long-term measures. In our eagerness to act quickly, we must make sure that actions taken now do not have negative consequences in the long term. For example, when we distribute fertilizer and seeds as part of our response, no concessions can be made to proper analysis. Each intervention must be put in a larger context. For instance, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations has drawn up excellent guidelines for seed aid. We must make sure they are used.

Norway welcomes the timely leadership shown by Kofi Annan in launching the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa. Increased productivity is clearly required to meet the needs of a growing global population, particularly in Africa, which has not enjoyed the increase in productivity seen in other parts of the world. In that regard, the private sector has to play a central role. Norway firmly believes in encouraging and facilitating public-private partnerships, but increased productivity is of little value to the African farmer if the products cannot reach a functional market.

Part of the answer to the crisis is to be found in the traditional development toolbox: infrastructure, improved governance and conducive economic policies. In our efforts to increase production, we must not back down on our principles of environmental sustainability. Those efforts must not lead to the loss of genetic resources for food and agriculture, including minor crops important for food security, nor must they cause the pollution or depletion of scarce water resources. Land tenure and property rights are another critical issue.

Let me also, through you, Sir, thank the Secretary-General for his leadership on the initiatives to develop concrete response measures to the food crisis. In that regard, we welcome the final proposal for a comprehensive framework for action that has been developed by the High-Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis. Norway is committed to playing an active role in the follow-up to the framework, and we therefore look forward to analysing the document and the recommendations it contains.

Mr. Muller (Marshall Islands): My delegation aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of the Kingdom of Tonga on behalf of the Pacific small island developing States.

My delegation addresses this body on a matter of grave and immediate importance. While we deeply appreciate the shared global challenges of the energy

and food crisis, the Republic of the Marshall Islands is truly at the forefront of that global emergency.

The Republic of the Marshall Islands now lacks basic energy security. Unless urgent international action is taken, the Marshall Islands will exhaust its present fuel supplies in September. That is a dire situation, in which we may be left without electricity for the foreseeable future.

On 3 July, His Excellency Litokwa Tomeing, the President of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, issued a proclamation declaring a state of emergency due to rising fuel and food costs. That declaration was accompanied by executive orders immediately to implement nationwide energy conservation measures, as well as action plans for every Government ministry and agency. We are taking direct measures, but are also seeking to ensure immediate energy security, as well as medium- and long-term conservation and alternative energy strategies that reduce reliance on imported fossil fuel. As a small island developing State, we are well aware of our limited capacity to meet those challenges successfully without the immediate assistance of Member States and multilateral partners. Our concentrated attention to the crisis also impairs our ability to devote our limited resources to addressing the threat of the impact of climate change on our low-lying nation.

Even though our energy consumption charges have increased almost fourfold in the past year, and even with substantial tariff increases, our utility companies are now struggling desperately to fulfil their basic financial obligations to fuel suppliers. Raising consumer prices even higher only serves further to deprive our population of essential lifeline services. The gap between revenue and energy costs now poses a tremendous economic threat to our continued development. Global energy price shocks have also placed basic food staples nearly out of reach for much of our population and have had a crippling effect on the transport of basic necessities, including medical care, to our rural outer islands. We are now fast-tracking domestic agricultural projects to reduce our heavy dependence on imported food.

We are seeking the assistance of all Member States, including bilateral development partners, as well as the cooperation of the Secretary-General, the United Nations system and its specialized agencies, to avert a looming national crisis of unimaginable magnitude. We are also asking those same partners to work with us on a fast-track planning initiative to identify, evaluate and implement cost-appropriate, sustainable energy strategies. In that regard, we refer to our note recently circulated to the Office of the Secretary-General, as well as the outreach efforts of our embassies around the world.

We are pleased to report that we have recently requested the assistance of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and UN-Energy as potential partners in our attempt to meet this critical challenge. We are identifying means to expedite our proposed membership in UNIDO. We embrace our recent conversations with key bilateral development partners, but also note that we are still facing critical immediate and long-term challenges.

The overwhelming flood of statements in this plenary meeting makes it clear that our experience is by no means isolated, even if we are on the front line of the crisis. The Marshall Islands wishes to add our voice to this urgent and complex global dialogue, but we will be able to continue to do so only with the immediate partnership of the global community.

Mr. Park In-kook (Republic of Korea): Let me first commend President Kerim on his excellent leadership in convening in a timely manner this meeting on the global food and energy crises, which are the most pressing challenges we face today. My thanks also go to the Secretary-General for his informative and succinct introductory remarks.

As the Secretary-General properly warned, the world is now faced with the triple challenge of addressing climate change, realizing the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and responding to the food and energy crises. If unchecked, high and volatile food and energy prices will continue to pose a serious threat to global economic stability and growth. Furthermore, they are likely to reverse the achievements made over decades in the eradication of poverty and hunger, one of the prime objectives of the MDGs. It is feared that, in addition to some 854 million people currently suffering from hunger, the food crisis may push yet another 100 million people into extreme poverty and hunger.

As many representatives have pointed out, what is needed the most now is an urgent and well-coordinated collective response from the international community. In that regard, my delegation appreciates

the tireless efforts of the Secretary-General in tackling the food crisis, including through the establishment of the High-Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis and the facilitation of the High-Level Conference on World Food Security in Rome last month. The Republic of Korea welcomes and supports the comprehensive framework for action and the Rome Declaration produced by the High-Level Task Force and the High-Level Conference, respectively. It is our belief that the two documents will serve as a valuable guideline as we seek to overcome the ongoing food crisis and to ensure sustainable global food security.

My delegation is of the view that the revised framework provides a range of options that we can choose from to deal with immediate needs, strengthen resilience and contribute to longer term food security. In order to achieve sustainable food security, mid- and long-term measures should be implemented in tandem with short-term and immediate measures.

To better implement the framework, it is imperative that the stakeholders build a consensus on a set of still-contentious issues such as biofuels, export restrictions, financial system reform including control of speculative investment, genetically modified organisms, and the local procurement of food assistance.

Here, I would like to share my thoughts on a couple of those issues. As for the biofuels issue, we believe that further research should be conducted in order to ensure that production of biofuels does not undermine food security. Export restrictions by food suppliers should be removed because they not only distort the world food market, but also decrease domestic productivity due to the relatively low domestic prices such restrictions engender.

My delegation believes that the global food crisis, if handled properly, could be transformed into an opportunity to revitalize agriculture and strengthen agricultural infrastructures. To that end, as the Secretary-General pointed out in his address at the Group of Eight summit in Hokkaido Toyako last week, we need a global partnership for food in which all stakeholders take part under the facilitation and coordination of the United Nations.

In addition, rural development is a prerequisite to achieving sustainable economic growth. In the course of our national development drive in the 1970s, rural development was an essential element. First and foremost, we focused on strengthening rural infrastructure, new technologies were introduced to increase agricultural production and investment in human resource development was given priority. The Republic of Korea is ready to share with any country its experience and knowledge gained in the process of its economic development over the past 40 years.

In conclusion, we firmly agree that only urgent and comprehensive action can offer potential solutions to the current crises. Our future will depend on how resolutely we endeavour to translate our commitments into concrete actions. In that regard, my delegation wishes to assure President Kerim of its full cooperation and support in addressing the current global crises.

Ms. Blum (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation would like to associate itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Antigua and Barbuda on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his presentation, as well as for the distribution of the comprehensive framework for action of the High-Level Task Force. We value this meeting as an opportunity to learn and exchange views on developments on the issues before us.

On previous occasions, Colombia has expressed its expectations with regard to the different areas of work of the Task Force. At this meeting, our concerns focus on the linkages between the global food situation and the challenges faced by the international community with respect to energy security.

First, we stress the complex and multidimensional nature of the food supply issue, which requires comprehensive responses including short-, medium- and long-term measures. In that context, we value the comprehensive nature of the framework for action.

Among the areas that are a priority for Colombia, we would stress the need to increase international aid capacity to respond to immediate food needs. We cannot postpone reducing imbalances and distortions within the multilateral trade system. We need to increase cooperation in adapting the agricultural sector to climate change, and to revitalize and increase agricultural and livestock productivity in developing countries in order to respond more effectively to the increase in global food demand.

Another priority is to address the situation created by the dynamic of energy supply and demand, especially given the striking increase in the price of oil, which in the past eight years has exceeded 500 per cent. That increase is echoed, for example, in the price of fertilizers, where the increase has approached 700 per cent. In Colombia, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development has determined that, in the structure of production costs in the agricultural and livestock industries, the prices of oil and fertilizers fluctuate between 30 to 40 per cent, including the cost of transport. It is thus very unlikely that the shock of 500 and 700 per cent increases in oil and fertilizer prices have not had a significant impact on the recent rise in food prices.

In that critical context, renewable energies, and specifically biofuels, appear to be viable alternatives in the context of sustainable development. Those alternatives would enable us to help to transform the energy economy, to improve national and international energy security, to reduce the costs of producing and transporting agricultural products, to invigorate the rural sector and to strengthen environmental protection, given the emissions reductions that can be achieved by implementing policies aimed at the extensive use of biofuels.

Therefore, it would be paradoxical to single out biofuels, on the basis of generalizations, as a decisive factor in the global food situation; we must take into account the specificities and particular conditions in producer countries. In addition, we must bear in mind that, despite the sector's growth in developing and developed countries, the global production of biofuels — ethanol and biodiesel — takes up less than 0.07 per cent of global food production.

In Colombia, the production of biofuels from sugar cane and oil palm has not involved using fertile lands once used for food production or reducing the national supply of agricultural foodstuffs. To the contrary, it has contributed to the creation of thousands of jobs, stimulating greater investment in rural areas and the productivity of underused land. In my country, which has a great abundance of cultivable land, biofuels represent a new opportunity to expand the agricultural frontier without affecting a single millimetre of forest. In turn, expanding the agricultural frontier means greater opportunities for food production and greater benefits for the poorest rural populations. For example, if we in Colombia used 50 per cent of suitable available land to plant sugar cane for ethanol and palm for biodiesel, we could create 800,000 new rural jobs.

I should like to reaffirm that biofuels production does not occur in a vacuum; it occurs in a context of significant challenges related to sustainable development and, above all, enormous difficulties regarding energy security at all levels. In that connection, we note that, while the Task Force's comprehensive framework for action recognizes the grave situation of oil prices in its contextual analysis, it does not include broad political guidelines on energy issues; its guidance is limited to the biofuels issue. We would like to see more ambitious actions planned regarding the energy crisis in general. For example, these could include measures to promote in-depth studies on the effects of high energy prices on food security, as well as recommendations including policy options to mitigate those effects at the national and international levels. Undoubtedly, many of the organizations represented in the High-Level Task Force could contribute to that end within their respective mandates.

Finally, I should like to express once again our appreciation for the Secretary-General's presentation and for his leadership in formulating the responses of the United Nations system to the food crisis. We hope that we will have further opportunities to express our points of view on those efforts and to make specific observations once a detailed assessment of the guidance contained in the framework for action has been carried out.

Ms. Rodríguez de Ortiz (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela thanks the President of the General Assembly for holding this timely and important meeting. It gives us an opportunity to stress issues of principle and to make a number of observations in this Hall that the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has already expressed at the Special Meeting of the Economic and Social Council on the Global Food Crisis and at the High-Level Conference of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) on World Food Security, entitled "The Challenges of Climate Change and Bioenergy", held in June in Rome. We also express our appreciation for the introduction of the comprehensive framework for action formulated by the High-Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis, established by Secretary-

General Ban Ki-moon on 28 April. In that connection, this delegation aligns itself with the statement made by the delegation of Antigua and Barbuda on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

The causes of the food crisis include the great effect of geopolitical factors on the food and energy markets and the vulnerability of those markets to speculative activity by public and private actors. Our delegation would like to stress that in 1996, when the right to food was reaffirmed at the World Food Summit, 800 million human beings suffered from hunger. By 2000, that figure had increased to 864 million, according to FAO statistics. Can we continue to describe this situation as a temporary crisis? Or is it the failure of neo-liberal economic models that are being imposed on us in accordance with the interests and strategies of the developed countries?

We take this opportunity to reiterate what the high authorities of Venezuela said during the Summit of Heads of State and Government on Food Security, held in Managua in May 2008, and at the Fifth PetroCaribe Summit, held on 12 July 2008 in Maracaibo. They identified the crisis of the capitalist model as the structural cause of both the food crisis and the global energy problems.

While the FAO High-Level Conference on World Food Security gave a sense of urgency to the issue of food security and put forward a strategy for the short, medium and long terms, we believe that it ignored important considerations related to the root causes of the crisis. Our delegation defends the right to food as one of the fundamental components of human rights, including the right to development. We reaffirm the right of all people to have access to healthful and nutritious food, together with the right to suitable food and the inalienable right of all people not to suffer from hunger.

In that connection, some try to put most of the blame on fossil fuels for the staggering rise in food prices and agricultural products. However, studies recognized by the FAO and other bodies have characterized as limited at best the effects of the rise in fossil fuel prices on the increase in food prices.

Secondly, there is the supposed alternative of biofuels, which affect food production because they compete for the lands and freshwater that would otherwise be used to guarantee the right to food. In 2008, biofuels production will consume approximately 35 million tons of oilseeds; 250 million tons of sugar cane, or approximately 20 per cent of world production; and more than 92 million tons of corn. That last figure represents approximately 30 per cent of the maize production of the United States and would supply 60 times the consumption of maize in a country such as Venezuela or six times that of Mexico, the world's largest consumer.

Similarly, the change from smallholder agricultural production for local consumption to large agribusiness has also affected the situation. Single crop production is mainly for export, while the monopolistic and oligopolistic practices of multinational food companies based on free trade agreements are obstructing the development of the peoples of the South.

The increase in prices in world energy products is more than just an issue of supply and demand. The geopolitical factor comes into play, especially with the wars of occupation undertaken by the United States in such a sensitive region for those markets as the Middle East.

There is also the crisis in the international financial and monetary markets, especially the weakening of the United States dollar; excessive speculation; the lack of regulation of the futures markets; the strangling of refining capacity; the drop in the level of certified oil reserves; problems in production in some countries and regions, such as the Niger Delta; the steady increase in demand both in the developed world and in many developing countries; and natural disasters, among other factors.

At the multilateral level, Venezuela has always promoted differentiated standards and disciplines that favour the developing world, especially in the World Trade Organization (WTO). The agreements prevailing at the WTO do not guarantee sufficient space for policies to enable countries of the South to implement active development policies, including an industrial policy that would allow them, for example, to change their production patterns and make progress towards goals such as diversification of production.

At the regional level, Venezuela has proposed the Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas (ALBA) as a way to break the cycle of profit and wealth for the few and poverty for the many. Venezuelan and Cuban technicians are carrying out major projects for

increased agricultural production in Haiti. Venezuelan urea is being traded at fair prices, which has meant significant savings for many smallholders in our sister countries.

Within the framework of ALBA, an agreement was recently signed on the development of cooperation programmes on sovereignty and food security, with the approval of a food security fund of $100 million to finance agricultural production projects put forward by ALBA countries and the establishment of a food trade network within ALBA.

The setting up of PetroCaribe has effectively and efficiently contributed to the development of sister countries in the Caribbean and Central America. About 200,000 barrels of crude and its derivatives are being delivered daily to member countries, most of which have limited energy resources, through the financing of their oil bill, which has allowed them to save $921 million, and with the establishment of eight joint ventures, which are developing joint investment projects, representing $552 million, for the development of refining, storage and oil delivery infrastructure.

Under the Bolivarian initiative, heads of State or Government, meeting at the fifth PetroCaribe summit, the declaration of which is being distributed as an annex to our written statement, agreed to establish a fund with 50 cents for each barrel of oil exported outside the cooperation agreements with Venezuela, in order to finance agricultural initiatives. We have also called upon the regulatory authorities of the futures markets and the New York and London stock exchanges to take the necessary measures to eliminate the speculation on international oil prices.

Recently, at the food security summit in Managua in May 2008 and the PetroCaribe summit on 12 July 2008, we adopted the coordination initiative for agricultural policies known as PetroAlimentos, which seeks to complement energy and food activities by establishing a fund that will finance activities such as the purchase of seeds for food production and agricultural inputs.

Finally, in order to seek alternatives to meet the challenges of the increase in the prices of food and food inputs, my country will be hosting a special regional conference of the Food and Agriculture Organization in the second half of 2008 to discuss, among other issues, the increase in food prices in the region and its impact on the people in our region so as to find a way effectively to eradicate poverty.

Mr. Ali (Malaysia): First, I would like to commend General Assembly President Kerim for his initiative and the Secretary-General for his briefing on the comprehensive framework for action.

What is required for us effectively to address the convergent food and fuel crises are conceptual clarity, evidence and the will to take action.

In terms of conceptual clarity, it is important to be mindful that the two crises are the offshoot of the unattained promises of sustainable development. Sustainable development must therefore continue to be the overarching framework for addressing both. Failure to observe this fundamental truth would result in, among other things, not addressing the issues in a balanced and comprehensive manner, duplicating efforts and not focusing on the most vulnerable groups, who bear the biggest share of suffering.

On the issue of evidence, conventional wisdom suggests that both the food and fuel crises are caused by the following common factors: increasing demand and supply constraints. In that context, in the case of the food crisis, it is caused by diminishing food stocks and the reduction in agricultural production and productivity, especially in the developing world. In the case of the fuel crisis, it is caused, at least in the short term, by insufficient production by the major exporters. The third common factor is speculation.

While we have had much discussion on the first two, the third has suffered from benign neglect. However, a recent paper by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development on that issue mentioned the following points. First, the flow of speculative capital into the commodity sector is a factor in the price increases. Secondly, it is likely that those increases are linked to global financial turmoil due to the sub-prime crisis, resulting in speculators looking for assets with rising prices reorienting their activities towards commodities. Thirdly, as of March 2008, $170 billion has been invested in the commodity sector. Fourthly, the first quarter of this year witnessed a 32-per-cent increase in the volume of globally traded grains and futures compared to the same period last year.

On that topic, the paper concludes that, while precise information and analysis are lacking on the

impact of speculative activity on food prices, the high prices of some key staples are due largely to speculation. Therefore, more evidence needs to be gathered in that regard. In addition to speculation, there is still a lack of clarity as to the precise nature, dynamics and extent of the links between the two crises.

With regard to the issue of our will to take action, comprehensively addressing these challenges requires considerable courage. Democratically elected Governments will have to make tough decisions, balancing not only competing interests in the future, but also the welfare of future generations.

For its part, the Malaysian Government has increased the price of petroleum by 40 per cent. While that has given rise to public complaints, the situation had been untenable, and if such an action had not been taken, for the first time in our history the Government's operating expenditures — of which fuel subsidies constituted a significant proportion — would have been higher than its development expenditures. In the end, a responsible Government is not necessarily a popular Government.

If we are to address this problem, all of us must make such tough decisions. It will not be easy. If a country like Malaysia, which is a net exporter of petroleum, has had to bite the bullet, the situation for importers must be infinitely worse. It is for that reason that we must view this as a shared enterprise for the sake of our common humanity, now and in the future. As first steps, we should address the following issues.

First, we must create a consensus on appropriate methods of producing or creating alternative sources of energy. Secondly, the major oil producers have an important role to play in addressing the interrelated problems of oil supply and prices by increasing their production of crude. Increases in production are, of course, mere short-term measures. Long-term solutions must be found to stabilize oil prices. For example, the international community could examine how the futures market might be organized to assist in stabilizing prices. Thirdly, we must share ideas on how to mitigate the negative effects of short-term actions to address these crises on the long-term requirements of sustained growth and development.

Like all other delegations, we have yet to fully analyse the comprehensive framework for action. However, our preliminary remarks are as follows. First, we note that the framework is not a funding instrument and that the figure of $25 billion to $40 billion, given as the annual global incremental financing requirement to maintain current progress towards achieving Millennium Development Goal 1, is an indicative one. However, if the framework is to be truly comprehensive, some way other than merely stating requirements needs to be found to marry its operational aspects with funding. Secondly, we look forward to constant interaction with the High-Level Task Force on the implementation and evolution of the comprehensive framework for action. Thirdly and finally, an evaluation framework must be built into the framework's implementation and evolution process.

Mr. McMahan (United States of America): Let me join others in thanking General Assembly President Kerim for convening this meeting. We appreciate very much Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's briefing this morning and his initiative to establish the High-Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis. We believe that the work of the Task Force and its comprehensive framework of action can help to ensure a timely and comprehensive United Nations response that takes advantage of the strengths of each United Nations agency and avoids duplication.

The United States is working closely with the international community and the United Nations system to address rising food prices and insecurity, and remains a leader in food-related assistance. The international community took an important first step towards addressing that problem at the High-Level Conference on World Food Security, held in Rome in June. We agreed that the international community — affected countries, donors and international organizations — must meet urgent humanitarian needs, support expanded food production, continue efforts towards trade liberalization and promote investments in science and technology to ensure food security in the long term. Our joint Declaration serves as an excellent basis on which to develop our response.

The High-Level Conference reflected the clear international consensus that many factors are contributing to increased food prices, including large increases in fuel and transportation costs; poor harvests in exporting countries due to adverse weather; the export restrictions of some countries; and the unprecedented, yet very welcome, economic growth and associated increase in demand for food products worldwide, especially in developing economies. The

increased focus on the development of biofuels as an alternative to oil-based fuels has also contributed to the increase in demand for agricultural products.

Given the complexity of the problem, we believe that overcoming the global food crisis will require a multi-tiered approach relying both on immediate emergency assistance and on long-term actions. In response to President Bush's May 2008 request to Congress for $770 million in additional food-related assistance, the United States is pursuing an integrated three-pronged strategy for assisting countries most in need. Under our strategy, we will provide immediate humanitarian assistance to those made vulnerable by rising food prices; support agricultural productivity and development, focusing on countries capable of rapidly increasing staple-food production; and promote trade liberalization and increased access to advanced agricultural technologies, including biotechnology. With our other food security assistance programmes already in place, the United States will spend nearly $5 billion in 2008 and 2009 to fight global hunger.

The United States is also committed to working with others to make progress on those aspects of the food situation that require a collective response. We encourage our fellow members of the World Trade Organization to conclude an ambitious agreement in the Doha Round this year that increases market access for agricultural products and reduces trade-distorting subsidies. We also encourage them to lift restrictions on agricultural exports, expand research, promote science-based regulation and encourage the adoption of innovative technology, including biotechnology.

We also see excellent opportunities for collaboration between the United Nations system and the Group of Eight (G8). Leaders of the G8 issued a strong statement on food security at their recent summit. They set a number of ambitious goals, including supporting the goal of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme of 6.2 per cent annual growth in agricultural productivity and doubling the production of key food staples in African countries meeting the Programme's criteria. A G8 experts group will monitor the implementation of those commitments, support the work of the High-Level Task Force and work with others to create a global partnership to address food security issues.

Many speakers have noted the close connection between rising food and energy prices. Clearly, food and energy security are now more closely linked and more important than ever before. Oil prices have risen sharply with increasing world demand for oil. As the G8 leaders stated, there is a need for all countries to reaffirm our shared interests in and responsibilities for promoting energy security. We need to make concerted efforts to address the underlying supply-and-demand causes of the rise in oil prices, increase transparency in oil markets, improve energy efficiency and promote diversification.

Biofuels have grown in importance as countries have struggled with the twin issues of food and energy security. In order to ensure the compatibility of sustainable biofuels policies with food security, the United States will accelerate the development and commercialization of sustainable second-generation biofuels from non-food plant materials and inedible biomass. We will also work together with other stakeholders to develop science-based benchmarks and indicators for biofuels production and use.

Mr. Khaleel (Maldives): Allow me at the outset to express my delegation's gratitude to General Assembly President Kerim for convening this important meeting of the General Assembly on the global food and energy crisis.

Allow me also to echo the sentiments of gratitude and appreciation expressed to the Secretary-General for his leadership in taking timely measures to address the crisis by the United Nations system in a comprehensive and coordinated manner.

The formation of the United Nations High-Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis and the constructive work that the Task Force is undertaking deserve recognition. The comprehensive framework for action drawn up by the Task Force contains the elements necessary for dealing with the serious crisis. It is, in our view, an important step in the right direction.

The international response to the global food and energy crisis has been remarkable. The outcome of the Rome summit and the actions taken by the major financial institutions and the leaders of the Group of Eight early this month give us much hope and encouragement. The special debate held by the Economic and Social Council earlier this year and this meeting of the General Assembly demonstrate the urgency and importance that the international community attaches to that crucial issue. We believe

that working together in partnership and generating the necessary resources to implement the comprehensive framework for action's recommendations will determine the success of our efforts.

As a small island developing country, the Maldives is extremely concerned about the global food and energy crisis. Although the food insecurity situation in the country at present is relatively stable, the potential of a severe blow to our economy from rising food and energy prices is real and alarmingly high. My Government is fully aware of the risks involved and is taking all necessary precautionary measures to ensure that the crisis does not adversely affect the daily lives and well-being of our people.

Due to the lack of land available for cultivation, poor soil conditions and the shortage of fresh water for irrigation, agricultural development is relatively limited in the Maldives. Except for coconut and fresh tuna fish, 90 per cent of our food items are imported from overseas. Presently, 98 per cent of our energy needs are met by importing fossil fuels. Heavy dependency on imports, limited storage facilities and ad hoc distribution pose severe food security risks. Developing the agricultural sector as the third pillar of our economy is one of the priorities of our seventh national development plan, which is being implemented at present. We are now working with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the International Fund for Agricultural Development, as well as the private sector, to develop the agriculture industry by introducing new and innovative techniques and technology that will make it a vehicle for commercially viable sustainable rural development.

Despite its numerous vulnerabilities and development constraints, the Maldives is among those countries that are presently on track to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) on time. While we have already achieved most of the goals, including MDG 1 on the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger, the ongoing food and energy crisis and the devastating effects of climate change pose severe challenges to the strides we have made in our development. Our struggle to achieve the nutrition targets could suffer serious negative effects as a result of the crisis.

My delegation believes that climate change should always be central to all discussions on food security. While short-term measures, such as urgent food aid and assistance to the most vulnerable, may ease the immediate pressure, a sustainable solution to the problem lies in a fair and equitable trading regime and a collective commitment to combat climate change and environmental degradation. The importance of the early completion of the Doha Round and the successful conclusion of the post-Bali negotiations in that regard cannot be overemphasized.

Before I conclude, allow me to flag an issue that should be of equal importance to us all — the steady depletion of global water resources. The causes of water scarcity are essentially similar to those of the present food crisis and are interrelated. Even at present, many countries are facing severe water shortages. Unless we take urgent and timely action, the depletion of water resources could have a much worse and more debilitating impact on mankind than that we have already seen.

Mr. Sallam (Saudi Arabia) (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank the President for convening this important meeting on the global food and energy crisis. We thank him for his endeavours and we also thank the Secretary-General for his efforts to find a way out of the crisis. My country's delegation endorses the statement made by the representative of Antigua and Barbuda on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

This meeting is taking place at just the right time, when there has been a surge in oil and food prices and when the problem of climate change is beginning to have adverse effects on the world economy and the economies of developing and small countries in particular. Saudi Arabia is working to stabilize the world energy market and to strengthen the economic and social development of developing countries. We are also seeking to foster prosperity across the globe.

The Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, organized an energy conference in Jeddah on 26 June 2008, with the participation of the largest oil producers and consumers from around the world, in order to limit the surge in the price of oil. He confirmed that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia will do everything in its power in the context of its oil policy to strengthen cooperation and dialogue between consumer and producer countries and to stabilize the oil market, while striking a balance between supply and demand and guaranteeing reliable oil supplies to the consumer.

He also indicated at the conference that Saudi Arabia, the largest oil producer, realizes that the world oil market has sufficient supplies and that there are increasing commercial reserves. He pledged to work with other OPEC countries to address the increase in the price of oil, which has been abnormally and unjustifiably high and could have adverse effects on the world economy.

At the Jeddah conference, the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques also announced an energy initiative for the poorest countries, with a $1 billion earmark to help developing countries to address the problem, and called on the World Bank to convene a major conference of donor countries and international financial and economic institutions to discuss the initiative. He also confirmed that the oil policy of the Kingdom was based on a fair price for oil that would not harm the interests of either producer or consumer countries. He also confirmed that Saudi Arabia is as keen to protect the interests of other countries as it is to protect its own. He also announced an additional initiative in which $500 million would be provided to developing countries on preferential terms through the Saudi Fund for Development in order to fund development projects. Saudi Arabia has also announced that, in July, it will increase its oil production by 200,000 barrels a day to stabilize the world price of oil, which continues to rise.

The Kingdom has allocated $500 million to the World Food Programme in order to help address the global food crisis and to help the World Food Programme itself to attain its objective of raising $750 million for that purpose. The Kingdom has also adopted an emergency Arab plan for food security comprising 10 proposed measures and mechanisms, and has called for the conclusion of a balanced world trade agreement promoting the achievement of Millennium Development Goal 3 on food security and sustainable agricultural development throughout the world, in particular in developing countries. We have also stressed the need to continue to review and develop policies, legislation and programmes aimed at attracting investment to the agricultural sector in countries with real agricultural potential and resources, with the participation of the private sector.

Mr. Tašovski (the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia): At the outset, I would like to express my gratitude to the President of the General Assembly for convening this timely meeting on the global food and energy crisis, which poses a serious threat to a number of countries worldwide. I should also like to express our appreciation to the Secretary-General for his briefing on the crisis and for his presentation of the revised comprehensive framework for action of the High-Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis.

My country has aligned itself with the statement delivered by the representative of France on behalf of the European Union.

The global food and energy crisis is one of the most important challenges of our time. It is a challenge that has an impact on all of us, poor or rich, developed or less developed, but that mostly affects vulnerable communities. Furthermore, with respect to global food security, feeding millions of hungry people should be one of the first concrete measures taken in a series of required measures by the international community to successfully tackle this very serious problem.

In that context, we welcome the initiative of the Secretary-General to create a special High-Level Task Force, coordinated by Mr. John Holmes, and its comprehensive framework for action, which contains a range of options and guidance on how to respond to the global food crisis in a coherent and coordinated way, tackling all aspects of humanitarian and development assistance with the aim of contributing to longer-term food security.

The response of United Nations agencies and the donor communities has been prompt and efficient. Just over a month ago, at the Rome Conference held under the auspices of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, all relevant stakeholders were brought together and adopted the Rome Declaration on World Food Security.

However, despite the success achieved to date, the joint planning and coordination to ensure sustainable food production needs to be continued, and food supplies must be provided unhindered. Furthermore, the focus should be on the causes of the crisis, which are years of neglect of the agricultural sector worldwide and a lack of investment to increase productivity. That should be improved immediately in order to make food available at reasonable prices through a more effective international trade system.

Among the underlying causes of the global food crisis is a lack of investment to increase food

productivity. In that respect, my Government has initiated a set of long-term measures, supported by financial investments of up to €420 million in the agricultural sector, aimed at meeting the long-term objective of increasing global food production by 50 per cent by the year 2030. At the same time, the world's population will reach 7.2 billion by 2015.

The Government of the Republic of Macedonia is expanding that set of measures in accordance with the recommendations arising out of the outcomes of the Rome and Group of Eight summits, taking into account the upcoming negotiations in Poznań and Copenhagen to reach a comprehensive agreement on global warming, one of the main root causes of the food and energy crisis.

Furthermore, in addition to the global food crisis, the international community is facing a swiftly increasing demand for energy. The gap between the rising demand and limited supply of energy resources is widening. Accordingly, the combined challenges of energy security, food security and climate change mitigation require joint action to increase renewable energy sources and, at the same time, create an energy-efficient system.

In that respect, my Government is doing its utmost to take full advantage of its own potential to fully meet our country's demand for electricity through renewable sources of energy. We are also promoting investment in the area of renewable energy through a common European Union support scheme. At the same time, however, we are aware that that visionary goal can be achieved only through coordinated action with the support of the international community. At this stage, our steps to meet the target of 20 per cent renewable energy by 2020 are symbolic but of enormous importance.

The food security and energy crisis is standing in the way of our efforts to eradicate extreme poverty and to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. However, we must not be discouraged. We should think positively and view the crisis as an opportunity for many countries to revitalize global agricultural production and trade by implementing short-term and long-term measures and actions to promote agricultural development at the national, regional and international levels.

Finally, we must prevail in addressing the world food and energy crisis. If new initiatives are to succeed, a sustained financial and political commitment is required. We are convinced that such a commitment, together with the credibility and leading role of the United Nations, will save millions of lives currently being threatened by hunger.

Mr. Benítez Versón (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): Cuba welcomes the decision to convene this debate. The current food crisis is part of the grave structural crisis of the world economy. The hunger suffered by 862 million people throughout the world is no incidental phenomenon; its origin is rooted in the effects of neo-liberal globalization, which results in the wasteful consumption of a few industrialized countries at the expense of the poverty of the great majority of humanity.

In the face of the crisis, the commitment to halve the number of people suffering from malnutrition by 2015 is nothing more than a hollow phrase. The paradox of the crisis is that there is sufficient food today to feed every human being on the planet.

The countries of the North are responsible for the world food crisis. The Governments of the developed countries imposed trade liberalization and structural adjustment formulas on the countries of the South. They thereby ruined many small producers, turning them into net food importers. The countries of the North refuse to eliminate scandalous agricultural subsidies, while at the same time they impose their own rules on international trade. Their voracious transnational companies set prices, monopolize technology, impose unfair certifications and manipulate distribution channels, sources of financing and trade.

We must also need to cite as another cause of the crisis the failure to honour commitments made with respect to official development assistance, the minimal transfer of technology and the speculation generated by bellicose adventurism.

As if that were not bad enough, the irrational aspirations of the rich countries to perpetuate their consumption patterns have led them to the sinister strategy of turning food into fuel. The irresponsible trend among developed countries, especially the United States and Europe, of using grains and cereals to produce biofuels has aggravated the crisis.

Cuba reaffirms that, although drafting sustainability criteria for producing biofuels could be an issue for discussion, they would have to start by

excluding basic food crops, such as grains and cereals, from biofuel production sources. The contrary would be a very severe threat to food security.

Cuba regrets that the Declaration adopted at the High-Level Conference on World Food Security of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) did not include an objective analysis of the causes of world hunger. If we are to eradicate hunger and malnutrition, we cannot simply adopt palliative measures. We need to work for sustained world action. The vast majority of countries defended that position at the Special Meeting on the food security of the Economic and Social Council and at the special session of the Human Rights Council proposed by Cuba on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement member countries.

We believe that the comprehensive framework for action established by the High-Level Task Force, established by the Secretary-General, is an evolving document. For the moment, we are studying it. We feel that it should be thoroughly examined by Member States.

Cuba believes that, among the measures to be adopted to address the current crisis, it would be necessary to establish an international, equitable and democratic order without wars of occupation and to devote at least a part of the millions of dollars of military expenditure to development. We must rebuild and develop agricultural production in the countries of the South. The developed countries have the resources to do so — they now need the political will. It is necessary to forgive the external debt of developing countries, which they have already paid more than once. The countries of the South would thereby have an additional $345 billion per year at their disposal. The developed countries must honour their commitment to devote at least 0.7 per cent of their gross national income to official development assistance. In that way, the countries of the South would, at the minimum, have an additional $130 billion every year available to them. We must devote just one quarter of the money that every year is wasted on commercial publicity to food production, which would provide almost an additional $250 billion to fight hunger and malnutrition. We should devote the money that is used for agricultural subsidies in the North to agricultural development in the South; our countries would thereby have approximately $1 billion to invest in food production every day. We must honour the commitments of the Kyoto Protocol without seeking to establish new conditionalities, and establish more ambitious emissions cuts under the programme adopted in Bali.

The current round of trade negotiations must be turned into a genuine and productive development round. The multilateral trading system should avert any damage to food security. The large transnational corporations in agro-business and the energy sector must be disciplined. A tax on their profits should be established as a contribution to an international fund, under the aegis of the United Nations, to support agricultural change in developing countries. The United Nations Development Programme must be able to address genuine development problems, facilitate modern agricultural technology transfer and assist in creating necessary capacity for urgent transformation needed in agriculture. That would complement the assistance of other agencies and programmes, such as FAO, the World Food Programme and the International Fund for Agricultural Development.

I would like to conclude by reaffirming Cuba's support for the convening of a special session of the General Assembly during its sixty-third session in order to consider in depth the issues related to food security and energy security. If that session were appropriately organized, it would allow us to achieve the concrete results that we all expect and need.

Mr. Mansour (Tunisia) (*spoke in French*): I should like at the outset to thank the President for taking the initiative to convene this meeting as a special moment for the United Nations and its development agenda. I would also like to congratulate the Secretary-General for his tireless mobilization efforts and for the extremely enlightening presentation of the comprehensive framework for action advocated by the High-Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis.

Before raising some specific points to which my delegation attaches special interest, I would like to associate my country with the statements made respectively by the representatives of Antigua and Barbuda and Ethiopia on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and the African Group.

Halfway through the agreed timeline for the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals, and in the context of food, financial and energy crises and climate threats, the impact of which is undermining

and even jeopardizing the achievement and perspectives for development, humankind is facing an unprecedented challenge. Hence, the urgency of coordinated international action in the short-, medium- and long-terms to address forthwith, upstream and downstream, the food crisis and its manifestations and underlying causes.

The International Conference in Rome made it possible to restore the food problem to the heart of the international community's agenda and to highlight the links between food, energy and climate change. The Declaration adopted on that occasion reflects the commitment of all parties to rise to immediate and longer-term challenges related to the food crisis, as well as to uphold the values of cooperation and solidarity.

In its action plan, the High-Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis proposed a unified and integrated response involving all stakeholders at all levels. Questions remain, however, regarding how to raise funding and mobilize resources for the developing countries, especially the poorest among them, which are already facing major funding difficulties.

The Secretary-General said this morning that the world food crisis is not just a short-term problem and that the price of inaction will be tragic for present and future generations. His proposals — especially for agricultural investment, upgrading rural economies, liberation of the agricultural market and increased assistance for small farmers — are just some of the avenues for action that my delegation considers to be of importance.

In highly rural regions, investment in the agricultural economy is a strategic choice, given its multiplying effect on production, the income of farmers, the level of food security, economic growth and human development. However, a strategy geared towards the rural and the agricultural economy requires substantial financial resources and predictable commercial outlets, which are lacking at present.

Other options could be examined, such as the possibility of granting preferential tariffs for the transportation of foodstuffs or the granting of urgent assistance in the form of agricultural inputs to countries suffering from a food shortage so as to allow them to develop their own production potential and to reconstitute their food stocks. Thus, it is recommended that financial assistance be provided to net food-importing countries to alleviate the budget deficit generated by the surge in prices, as well as to reduce the taxes and customs payments on imported foodstuffs.

I should like to take this opportunity to congratulate the President of the General Assembly and the many delegations that have highlighted the principles of solidarity and cooperation as fundamental values in international relations and in settling world crises, such as the food and energy crisis. As a result, many proposed actions and new guidelines for financing based on solidarity and cooperation have been presented in a number of forums.

In my delegation's opinion and in the light of the urgency of the situation, it is very appropriate to make immediate use of the existing financing mechanisms. In that context and among such initiatives, I should like to mention the appeal launched on 28 April 2008 by the President of Tunisia, Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, urging countries to contribute to the world solidarity endeavour and to fight together against hunger, poverty and insecurity in the world by levying a dollar per barrel of oil for allocation to the World Solidarity Fund created by the United Nations in 2002 pursuant to a General Assembly resolution. That mechanism, operational since 2002, was given a legal and institutional framework decided upon by all the stakeholders.

The World Solidarity Fund, established as a trust fund of the United Nations Development Programme, is intended to contribute to the promotion of human development and to the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals, particularly the reduction of poverty, through interventions to improve the living conditions of the most needy populations and to support income-generating activities, especially in rural areas and in the sphere of small crafts and trade, through microfinancing and microbusiness.

Mr. Bui The Giang (Viet Nam): I wish to thank General Assembly President Kerim for convening this important meeting on the food and energy crisis.

Let me also join other speakers in commending the practical steps that the United Nations has taken to address the food crisis issue, particularly the Secretary-General's initiative to establish the United Nations inter-agency High-Level Task Force to promote a unified response to the global food challenge. I

especially appreciate the comprehensive framework for action that the Task Force has just issued, for it has succeeded to a certain extent in its aim of providing a range of options from which choices can be made by Governments and institutions, as well as guidance and impetus to the many actors to address immediate needs, build resilience and contribute to long-term food security, as clearly stated by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in the cover letter of the document.

We shall thoroughly study the document in order to select and apply whatever is best suited to the specific conditions of Viet Nam. We also wish to see the document expand further to cover in greater length continuously soaring oil prices and the energy supply deficit — one of the main and direct causes of the food crisis.

Although a rice-exporting country, Viet Nam has not been an exception in the food crisis. The escalation in the price of oil has sharply triggered food-processing costs and the costs of fertilizers, shipping and storage, resulting in soaring food prices. Within two months of April and May this year, Vietnamese consumers experienced a twofold increase in the price of rice. At the macro level, the price escalation has been followed by a two-digit inflation rate, which poses a formidable challenge for the Vietnamese economy this year.

Faced with this situation, the Vietnamese Government has undertaken a series of emergency measures to ensure a sufficient supply of rice in the market, while accelerating the elaboration of a long-term plan on food security, for which, we believe, the Task Force's comprehensive framework for action will serve as an essential input.

As the world's second largest rice exporter, Viet Nam is fully aware of its responsibility at this difficult time. Over the past several months, we have signed rice-exporting contracts with a number of Asian and African partners. In anticipation of the country's estimated rice export volume of 4.5 million metric tons this year, or even more if our farmers can enjoy another bumper harvest this winter, my Government continues to put in place more intensive measures to help increase agricultural production, including, inter alia, promoting agro-based research and development, improving rice varieties, providing farmers with fertilizers and technical assistance, and upgrading irrigation networks and storage and transport facilities. Hopefully, those measures will allow us to ensure our long-term domestic food security and, at the same time, contribute to a stable global food supply.

As I mentioned a moment ago, there is a close association between the current food crisis and the high price of energy, calling for a solution that deals with both crises simultaneously. Therefore, while recognizing the efforts of many countries and organizations to carry out in-depth research for new sources of energy and to maintain oil-production levels, we propose that the United Nations develop a comprehensive study on the energy crisis and, on that basis, produce a set of policy recommendations at the national, regional and global levels, as the comprehensive framework for action has done in relation to the food crisis. If such a document can be prepared, the United Nations can again prove its indispensable value as a centre of collective wisdom to the world community in general, and developing countries in particular.

The meeting rose at 6.10 p.m.

United Nations A/62/PV.114

General Assembly
Sixty-second session

Official Records

114th plenary meeting
Monday, 21 July 2008, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Kerim ..... (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Hannesson (Iceland), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Meeting on the global food and energy crisis

Agenda item 48 (*continued*)

Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields

Mr. Biabaroh-Iboro (Congo) (*spoke in French*): My delegation welcomes the convening of this important debate on the global food and energy crisis. The crisis gives rise to extremely worrying events in many countries and could deal a death blow to already fragile economies and to social cohesion in poor countries.

My delegation endorses the statements made by the representative of Antigua and Barbuda on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and by the representative of Ethiopia on behalf of the African Group, but would like to make some comments in its national capacity.

The current food crisis is particularly complex: it is substantially different from previous crises. It is generated by a combination of factors, among them climate change, the biofuel issue, protectionism, agricultural subsidies, demographic pressure and the surge in oil prices. For its part, the current energy crisis, while posing a problem in itself, is also a decisive factor in the food crisis. It is therefore imperative to adopt a holistic approach including all of these interdependent issues. There is no better place to consider coherent consensus-based solutions than this universal Organization.

We therefore thank the Secretary-General and the High-Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis for having presented Member States with an important working document that conveys the consensus among international organizations and institutions on the best ways to combat the food crisis. In our view, that comprehensive framework for action takes account of all the multidimensional aspects of this serious problem, even if more time is required to study it. It aims to provide the international community with the means to face the triple challenge of combating climate change, attaining the Millennium Development Goals and combating the global food and energy crisis, while at the same time addressing the need for flexible implementation in consonance with each country's particular conditions and needs. My delegation therefore expresses its support for consideration of the opportunities offered by the comprehensive framework for action, with a view to reaching the goal of integrated rural development.

We welcome the emergency worldwide of other complementary initiatives aimed principally at eradicating world poverty and hunger. These include: the African business plan under the New Partnership for Africa's Development, which gives priority to addressing the challenges facing Africa, including agricultural development; the new partnership among

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the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the World Food Programme (WFP) established on 4 June at the recent FAO Conference on World Food Security, held in Rome; the final declaration adopted by consensus at that conference on 5 June, which urges the international community, in particular the countries of the Group of Eight, to help poor countries to withstand the shock of soaring food prices; the FAO initiative on soaring food prices, which we would like to see extended to all countries threatened by the food crisis; and the FAO appeal for $30 billion a year to combat the food crisis.

While considering that food aid is not enough to resolve the complex problem of world hunger, Congo favours increased budgets for organizations such as the WFP, in order to help them deal with increased food prices. We also favour the implementation of crisis mitigation measures by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, including increasing agricultural loans for Africa and providing emergency monetary assistance to the most severely affected countries, among other measures.

We welcome the readiness of some countries to increase their emergency food aid. These include the United States of America, which on 14 April made available $200 million from a special trust fund in order to bolster the capacity of the United States Agency for International Development. Another instance is that of Saudi Arabia, whose $500 million in assistance has enabled the WFP to reach its goal of $755 million, in the context of its emergency food crisis appeal. Likewise, we take note of the commitment to double its assistance to Africa between now and 2012 undertaken by Japan at the fourth Tokyo International Conference on African Development of 28 to 30 May 2008 at Yokohama, not to mention the efforts of France and the European Union.

In Africa, we welcome the establishment at its annual meeting, held from 14 and 15 May 2008 in Maputo, of a financing mechanism within the African Development Bank intended to facilitate access to fertilizers for States members of the African Union.

As regards biofuels, the debate should be framed not so much in terms of systematic opposition between subsistence crops and that specific source of energy, as in terms of a quest for a fair balance between food security and energy security.

Congo has pledged to put in place a national strategy to preserve natural ecosystems based on socio-economic realities.

The Congolese Government reserves the right to ensure that the impact of national policies and of all agreements arising from the current rounds of negotiation be, insofar as possible, the subject of follow-up so that they are not implemented to the detriment of the poorest populations and of long-term national interests.

In conclusion, Congo is firmly convinced that the current food crisis is not something that we must resign ourselves to, but affords an opportunity to restore agriculture to its priority position, especially in developing countries.

As it strives to join States in implementing that priority objective, the United Nations should, inter alia, secure the desired strengthening of systemwide coordination in order truly to be in a position to demand respect for commitments undertaken and to achieve efficiency in the implementation of the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and in the harmonious execution of the comprehensive framework for action.

Mr. Lima (Cape Verde) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank the President for having convened this very important meeting. Allow me also to congratulate the Secretary-General for the report presented by the High-Level Task Force and for his tireless efforts to end the crisis.

Cape Verde associates itself with the statements made by the representatives of Antigua and Barbuda on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and of Ethiopia on behalf of the Group of African States.

There can clearly be no doubt as to the correlation between the global food crisis and the energy crisis. The causes of those crises are many, some natural and others man-made, but what seems indisputably evident today is that the consequences of the crises fall on the poorest and the most vulnerable, who see two thirds of their income spent on food and nothing or almost nothing devoted to medical care, education or other household expenses. Recent estimates indicate that more than 800 million people currently run the risk of experiencing hunger, and in

recent months, 100 million additional people will enter the ranks of those who meet the criteria of extreme poverty.

Due to the effects of climate change, drought and desertification, floods, deforestation and the growing use of arable land for biofuels, the growing scarcity of water resources, not to mention market speculation, the high costs of oil and fertilizers, as well as erroneous policies promoted planetwide, the global food supply can no longer keep pace with the growing world population, which will reach 9 billion people in 2050.

It is important to understand that the coincidence of the global food and energy crisis with climate change is a global challenge and a potential threat to peace and security. We have learned from the riots that have erupted in various countries that people already living in conditions of extreme vulnerability are in a stranglehold and capable of desperate and uncontrolled action that could exacerbate the current crisis and take on dimensions that we cannot foresee. Global solutions are thus required in order to properly meet the concerns of all nations and their peoples.

Along those lines, permanent solutions based on defensive actions do not seem to correspond to the real solutions that are required. The food problem is now a humanitarian problem and touches on the general interests of all, and therefore requires decisive action now more than ever before, particularly in the financial sphere on the basis of a partnership of solidarity.

We greatly appreciate the comprehensive framework for action presented by the High-Level Task Force, which should be adopted as a common and coordinated strategy document. We greatly appreciate the interpretations of the framework that we have heard during the course of this debate and hope that the criticism and observations will be taken into account to the benefit of common action.

It is crucial to strengthen political will with a view to ensuring that the actions recommended in the comprehensive framework for action are implemented by all at all levels — national, regional and international — as swiftly as possible, taking into account the specificities of each country. I run the risk of repeating myself, but we believe that predictable and reliable financial support is crucial if such actions are to succeed in ending the crisis.

The global food crisis could be a great opportunity, as other speakers have said before me, to make thorough changes in the current world order that can guarantee direct investment in the agricultural sector of developing countries, particularly in Africa, responding thereby to one of the causes of poverty in the world. Likewise, local farmers should be able to obtain support for their own self-sufficiency and to allow them to discard outdated models of unsustainable food development.

The probability of achieving the Millennium Development Goals is diminishing daily for many developing countries. The global food and energy crisis highlights the need to adopt a holistic approach to sustainable development. In our interdependent world, there can be no progress in reducing the impact of climate change without real progress with respect to sustainable development. A substantial increase in the quantity and quality of official development assistance to meet the 0.7 per cent of gross national income; additional assistance for adaptation to climate change, including financial assistance for developing and vulnerable countries; technology transfer, including clean technologies; and investment in infrastructure are all undoubtedly urgent.

However, equitable trade; the successful completion of the Doha Round; eliminating the unsustainable debt of developing countries, small island developing States and middle-income countries; and reform of the global financial architecture are all complementary and essential elements that should be borne in mind within that framework. What is certain is that decisive action is necessary in the short, medium and long term in order to preserve human security.

My country, Cape Verde, greatly depends on the importation of oil and consumer goods, including a large number of food commodities. Domestic production represents only 20 per cent of the country's needs due to our geographic configuration and the effects of an increasingly unpredictable climate. Our archipelago is also vulnerable to external shocks, and therefore the repercussions of the increase in food and oil prices endanger our already fragile economy and could affect our political stability.

In order to minimize the impact on our population of the growing prices in the international market for agricultural commodities and oil, the Government of Cape Verde has taken compensatory measures despite

their impact on the budget. The country's development is currently in jeopardy and, due to the effects of climate change, the lives of our people are certainly at increasing risk. Our vulnerability now overshadows our indices of progress, and the fact that we are now part of the group of middle-income countries is but meagre consolation. That is why we support the joint proposal made by Egypt, Chile and Indonesia to request that the central theme of the sixty-third session of the General Assembly focus on food security and development.

There is no doubt that people do not want to continue to live in a world where the great majority must increasingly suffer every ill and pay such a high price just to be part of humankind. We firmly believe that it is only a matter of time until all peoples realize that humankind can live together and achieve a decent life of progress in peace and harmony with Mother Nature.

Mr. Urbina (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to begin by thanking the President of the General Assembly for the timely convening of this debate. I also thank the Secretary-General for his presence and for his message last Friday.

My delegation associates itself with the statements made by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Honduras on behalf of the Central American Integration System and by the Deputy Permanent Representative of Antigua and Barbuda on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

The food and energy crises are compounded today by other adverse global phenomena that pose an unprecedented challenge to humankind. That challenge compels us to devise and undertake innovative steps that should also bear the stamp of solidarity. The food crisis, which has brought us together today, is very different in nature from others that have preceded it, foremost because any prior phenomenon was acknowledged to be a geographically limited shortage of food, but this is the first time that specialists are referring to a global food crisis.

The crisis is also unique in that no previous food shortage has been so acute, nor have its manifestations been so global. Currently, food reserves are at their lowest point in many decades, while the rise in food prices has been felt in even the smallest and most remote village on the planet. Another new feature of the food crisis is that, for the first time, abundant harvests worldwide have accompanied the dearth of food. Notwithstanding such abundance, the heartening recovery from poverty of hundreds of millions of human beings in recent years has generated an additional demand that is contributing to today's shortage.

Therefore, the limited instruments to address this unprecedented challenge also need to be novel. We can rely no longer, or only to a small extent, on an expansion of farmland. Arable land has almost reached its limit, and we must therefore rely on new increases in productivity, on enhancing the value of agricultural labour and on solidarity as part and parcel of those innovative weapons for resolving the new dilemma of the twenty-first century.

Lastly, no previous shortage has had a greater effect on the feeding of human beings. The shortage of foodstuffs and its significance for animal feed will also have an undeniable impact, not yet clearly determined, on the production of animal protein for human consumption.

It is only natural that the food shortage and crisis should affect first and foremost the least developed peoples, who are also being punished by a world energy crisis arising from an increase in demand for and speculation in oil, among other reasons.

The energy crisis is having a twofold impact on the food crisis. On the one hand, the increase in the cost of transportation has an impact on the cost of food. On the other hand, the production of biofuels affects the prices of foodstuffs. That has been confirmed by a study of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, issued only five days ago. The study also asserts that support policies for biofuel production are expensive, have little impact on the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, and contribute little to the energy security of the producing countries.

These are particularly dire times. The magnitude and nature of the present and future crises alert us to the fact that there will be no easy or swift solutions. Sacrifice, the need for reflection and study, and new displays of solidarity must guide the international community and the Organization in their endeavours to safeguard the well-being of future generations.

Thus, Costa Rica thanks the Secretary-General for his efforts in establishing and guiding the High-

Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis, as well as the international organizations, agencies and funds that extended their assistance to developing the comprehensive framework for action. Both the actions aimed at responding to immediate needs and those geared to promoting recovery in the long term point in the right direction.

However, Costa Rica wishes to call for the fulfilment of the United Nations targets for development assistance. Last year saw the third consecutive reduction in development assistance funds, and only four member countries of the Development Assistance Committee exceeded 0.7 per cent of their gross national income. Some major donors are still well below 0.2 per cent.

While Costa Rica backs the measures that have been proposed, as well as those that may be adopted within intergovernmental negotiations, we caution that, in addition to those, the world must move towards new goals of fairness and solidarity. That is the only way that we shall overcome today's crises and threats in the medium and long term.

Mr. Hermida Castillo (Nicaragua) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, we would like to congratulate President Kerim for having convened this special meeting on the food and energy crisis. We express our support for the Secretary-General in determining the causes of and proposed solutions to the crisis.

My delegation aligns itself with the statements made by the representatives of Antigua and Barbuda on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and of Honduras on behalf of the Central American Integration System.

My statement will be limited to recalling a few of the main points which should be taken into account when we attempt to formulate and apply strategies to resolve the crisis that brings us together today.

As was wisely mentioned in the document that the Secretary-General transmitted a few days ago and which we are analysing in a detailed way today, the food crisis is the culmination of a structural crisis of an economic model that was thrust upon the world. This crisis could be discerned from the beginning of the millennium, and a few world leaders warned of the consequences of the production of biofuels in this way and with these ends in mind.

If this comprehensive framework for action aimed to reduce the existing gaps between humanitarian assistance and development assistance, we have to work on the basis that this humanitarian assistance would be more a responsibility that should be assumed by those who have imposed the economic model that is now falling apart and which, even so, imposes conditions on humanitarian assistance.

We take note of the establishment of a framework of standards for biofuel production as well as promoting research on the impact of biofuels on food security. Nonetheless, the reality is that due to a countless number of conflicting interests, these negotiations could take a great deal of time which we do not have the luxury to afford.

On the basis of this reality, the most important thing is to stress that there is nothing as inhuman as planting food to fuel machines rather than human beings, since we have 950 million people in the world who lack food. As a result, the latter must be the starting point of any decision, bearing in mind that it would be impossible to talk about development and attaining the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) if there is no human capital to achieve those things.

Furthermore, taking up the idea of the structural causes of the crisis, solutions must also be structural in nature, because otherwise we would fall into a vicious circle and in time other crises would emerge.

In this respect, the comprehensive framework document proposes the reduction or elimination of trade distortions, including restrictions and farm subsidies in developed countries. Nicaragua reasserts that we must eliminate those factors, since if we do not, we would be triggering that vicious circle, which the free market fuels. That is especially true if we want to implement as a strategy the strengthening of existing programmes to promote the agricultural sector instead of establishing new programmes, thus making it crucial to change strategies and policies that have proved to be inefficient.

It would be impossible not to consider the possibility that if we do not mobilize the political will to resolve the issues that I have mentioned, it would be difficult to find the will to tackle one of the greatest challenges to mankind, namely climate change and its devastating effects.

With respect to the energy crisis, we stress that the first measure must be to change the wasteful consumption patterns of industrialized countries.

In response to the needs of Latin American and Caribbean countries, a union emerged based on the solidarity of peoples. This is reflected in PetroCaribe and the Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas (ALBA), which was established thanks to the generosity of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and which allows access to oil at preferential prices and under preferential conditions.

When the price of a barrel of oil crossed the $100 mark, the payment of 50 per cent of the bill in 90 days was reduced to 40 per cent. Indeed, when the price of a barrel went beyond $150, President Hugo Chávez expressed the consent of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to reduce to 30 per cent the payment for this same 90-day timeline; the rest was financed over 25 years with an extremely low 1-per-cent year-over-year rate of interest.

This is truly an expression of solidarity, and it is a mechanism of real and effective integration of political, social and economic cooperation based on complementarity, respect for sovereignty and the self-determination of peoples. These are the bases for a fair market in which 18 countries of Latin America and the Caribbean have agreed to participate.

The depth of this crisis forces us to acknowledge that the consumerist lifestyle can no longer be sustained and that, instead of thinking about how to produce more food and fuel for this consumerist system, we have to think about how to begin to save, conserve and sustainably produce these resources. We must generate these profound changes in socio-economic policies. But we also have to apply these changes in each of our activities, including the most basic ones, which means that not all changes are technological, but rather, and above all, are changes in awareness.

Mr. Alahraf (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to extend my thanks to the President for organizing this meeting. We hope that it will contribute to efforts to deal with the global food and energy crisis. I would like to express my delegation's support for the statements made by the representative of Ethiopia on behalf of the Group of African States and by the representative of Antigua and Barbuda on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

There is no doubt that the General Assembly's consideration of this issue provides us with the opportunity to hear the different positions and views on how to deal with the global food crisis. I would like to thank the Secretary-General for transmitting the comprehensive framework for action, which proposes a number of actions to deal with the challenges posed by the global food crisis. We believe that this document provides us with an opportunity to discuss and interact, bridging the gaps in our points of view and reaching a common understanding on the starting point for identifying sustainable long-term solutions for this crisis.

We believe, in this context, that sustainable development is the comprehensive framework for dealing with the situation and implementing appropriate solutions. It has become clear that many developing countries, particularly the poorest among them, are facing an acute food crisis that could threaten their political and socio-economic stability. Despite the fact that providing emergency food aid is a rapid and positive response that can help ease the crisis, a radical solution requires an understanding of the erroneous international policies of the past two decades. Such policies failed to focus sufficiently on threats to food security such as the increase in population, the impact of climate change and the decrease in agricultural production. There is evidence that capital flows have distorted markets in basic foodstuffs, thereby worsening the situation.

Making the situation still worse, emergency international aid to the agricultural sector has declined in recent years, from $8 billion to $3.4 billion. The rise in energy costs does not seem to be one of the principal reasons for the rise in food prices; while one must recognize that the increased transport and shipment costs are one of the causes, these are not a direct cause of the crisis.

We should concentrate on seeking means to deal with the crisis in an objective manner. In this context, we agree that investment in agriculture is a key tool for combating poverty and hunger and ensuring sustainable development. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Trade Organization and the international financial institutions therefore have the responsibility to encourage such investment on the country and regional levels especially in developing countries.

Rich countries are also called upon to give up their policies of protecting their agricultural products and to allow fair competition, which opens the doors

for developing countries to increase their agricultural production and obtain modern agricultural technology and better means of increasing the quantity and quality of their agricultural output.

It is paradoxical that a world which in 2006 spent more than $1.2 trillion on weapons currently faces a food crisis. Only $30 billion to $40 billion per year is needed to guarantee increased agricultural production, to provide food for those who find difficulty in securing their livelihood and to protect future generations from hunger and poverty.

It has become clear that the international community needs to adopt and implement strategic policies based on dialogue, taking our common interests into account. We emphasize the importance of coordinating and uniting national, regional and international efforts to guarantee increases in food production. We must eliminate the obstacles to that, by providing financing, building national capacities, and facilitating access to technology and other things needed for production.

Libya is among the food-importing countries. In order to ease the food crisis, we have reduced or eliminated fees and tariffs on food imports and, at the national level, we are carrying out a project to grow wheat on 100,000 hectares of irrigated land, showing the importance of regional complementarity as a major factor in increasing the quality and quantity of production. With a number of African countries, Libya is making joint investments to increase agricultural production and encourage private investment in this sector.

Finally, I would like to emphasize the efforts undertaken by the High-Level Task Force established by the Secretary-General to establish a framework to deal with this crisis. We hope that the international community will address this crisis in good conscience and without political considerations. We should realize that any increase in the number of the hungry and in their suffering could trigger an economic and social crisis affecting the security and stability of many of our communities and peoples.

Mr. Maksimychev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): First and foremost, I would like to thank the President for his initiative to convene this debate.

It is tragic that in the twenty-first century, notwithstanding the unprecedented development of productive capacity, the growth in labour productivity and public wealth and the flourishing of science and technology the likes of which we have never seen before, the United Nations is compelled to address the problem of the world food crisis and the threat of hunger. The sharp increase in food prices threatens to become a grave crisis.

The history of food prices is a further demonstration of how responsibly one must approach economic decisions and how meticulously one must calculate their consequences, including social ones. There are various views on the reasons for what is happening. It is all too easy to explain the crisis away by blaming the growth in consumption in major developing countries, especially those with large populations. But those countries can mostly feed themselves, so they are not the main causes; other factors are in play here. We feel that an extremely adverse role was played by the abrupt shift, one that was subsidized to boot, to the production of biofuel from food crops. There has been a substantial distortion in the world agricultural market as a result of export subsidies by developed countries. As a result, agriculture is stagnating in many developing countries. The rush to enrich and support domestic farmers has entailed the ruin of others. Pragmatism does not allow any country to spurn protective measures, and the price rises were predictable.

We feel that the international community's response to the global food crisis must proceed on two tracks: a humanitarian one, providing the necessary assistance for the countries and regions most severely afflicted by the crisis; and a long-term one, eradicating the reasons for the crisis and creating conditions for sustainable food security worldwide.

Existing technologies allow us to provide full food supplies to twice as many people as live on our planet today. We need to take decisions that will make it possible to tap these opportunities in the interests of all people. We also need a precisely calibrated approach to the development of genetically modified products, which would resolve a number of food issues, but on which humankind has not yet found common ground.

The only way out of the crisis is through harmonious, national and international action by all countries in the form of a wide-ranging global partnership on agriculture and food, with the

coordinating role taken by the United Nations. An important step in that direction was the Rome Conference on Food Security and the declaration adopted there.

The Russian response to the food crisis will be a maximum stepping up of food output, including of grains, and the development of agricultural infrastructure. Russia used to be one of the world's largest grain suppliers and intends to regain that position. Of course, we have an interest in participating in international cooperative efforts as well, including scientific research, economic analysis and training.

We support the drive for an early conclusion to the negotiations on agricultural trade. The time is clearly now for closer attention to be paid to a holistic discussion of future international agricultural policy. In our view, the appropriate venue for this is the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). This would bolster its central role and effectiveness. Obviously, this year and next, we will have to vigorously tackle issues related to stabilizing food markets and will need to study a number of interesting ideas proposed by our partners, including at the Rome Conference, in June.

As the Assembly well knows, President Medvedev of Russia, at the Group of Eight (G8) Summit held in July in Toyako, proposed a number of ideas, including the convening of a meeting of G8 agriculture ministers in conjunction with an invitation to major food producer and exporter countries and key international organizations.

A further Russian initiative is the world grain summit planned for 2009 in Moscow: a wide-ranging, high-level ministerial forum with the participation of representatives of major grain-producing Powers, international organizations, major associations, grain-producing companies and traders. Its aim would be to discuss possible measures to stabilize grain market prices, increase production, create reserves, including virtual reserves and ensure the necessary investments in infrastructure and reductions in speculative manipulation.

As regards the energy crisis, the reasons for the surges of instability and frenetic demand we are witnessing on oil markets are also very diverse. However, unlike agriculture, a major role is played by political instability in the Middle East region. Speculation is also a strong factor.

We feel that the response to the energy crisis must be formulated on the basis of the principles of global energy security adopted at the G8 Summit in Saint Petersburg in 2006. Their leitmotif is the shared responsibility of producers and consumers of energy resources, the responsibility of transit countries and the establishment of relations of true partnership among all players on the energy market. In this regard, much seems to have been done, but the real market situation shows that efforts must be continued. We are talking here about establishing a favourable investment regime, a transparent system for market access and the use of the full range of renewable energy sources, not just biofuels.

How the energy market position develops will ultimately determine the solution to a number of complex food and climate change problems. Russia's policy is fully consistent with our international obligations. We are stepping up opportunities for the transport of energy resources. We have decided to liberalize the gas market and to reduce the tax burden on the oil sector. We are concluding large-scale reforms in the electrical power sector. Decisions have been taken on a set of measures to enhance energy efficiency.

Those steps will not only bolster the Russian fuel and energy sectors, but will also make a telling contribution to stabilizing global energy markets. We are on the threshold of booming nuclear power, with countries being pushed towards it also by the surge in oil prices. We are wholly in favour of nuclear power as the only alternative source able to occupy a key place in the energy balance in the near future.

Mr. Ja'afari (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): The Syrian Arab Republic aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Antigua and Barbuda on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. I should like to extend my thanks to the President of the General Assembly for holding this meeting on the global food and energy crises.

Previous speakers have underscored the seriousness of the food and energy crisis that threatens the daily livelihood of millions of people in the world. This could threaten the stability and security of the many countries that are disproportionately affected by the crisis. Given the surge in food and energy prices, the crisis should be taken seriously due to its great

impact on the economic development of many developing countries.

In that context, my delegation notes that the surge in energy prices is compounded by the environment of tension and instability that results from the foreign policies of some major Powers on the international scene, in particular in the Middle East. There is also the speculation in oil products and commodities that we are witnessing on the international money markets in developed countries.

The rise in food prices and the food crisis in general have a number of causes. One is the decline in international investment in the agricultural production and research sectors and the increased demand resulting from the rising world population and enhanced purchasing power in certain countries. Another factor is increased investment in alternatives to fossil fuels, resulting in the production of biofuels from crops usually grown for human consumption. Yet another is the speculation of food prices in the international money and commodity markets, particularly in developed countries.

In the environmental sphere, we note the great frequency of climatic disasters that cause a reduction in agricultural production; these include drought, desertification, frost, rising temperatures and declining water resources. Such environmental factors result basically from increased rates of pollution and from the failure of some countries to respect their obligations under the Kyoto Agreement and other international agreements and conventions on the protection of the environment. Most countries in the Arab region, particularly Syria, suffer as a result of those environmental factors.

My country believes that any international strategy to bring about food security must take into account all of those factors and deal with the root causes of the crisis, in a context that leads to promoting the three pillars for sustainable development — the economic, the social and the environmental. Above all, that strategy should be founded on genuine political will, particularly by the developed countries.

Over the past three decades, my country, Syria, has achieved self-sufficiency and food security through the special priority the Government has given to the agricultural sector, which now constitutes a significant part of Syria's gross domestic product.

The ongoing Israeli occupation of the Syrian Golan since 1967 has deprived my country of its more fertile and productive agricultural lands, and we have lost a large opportunity for agricultural labour. The Israeli occupation authorities have exposed our occupied territory to serious environmental danger, with the burial of toxic waste in the occupied Syrian Golan. That is a very serious matter, to which we have repeatedly drawn the attention of the international community in more than one forum. We have called upon it to pressure Israel to stop such activities and remove toxic nuclear waste from our occupied territory.

Our capitals have not been given the opportunity to study and consider the comprehensive framework for action prepared by the High-Level Task Force set up by the Secretary-General: the framework was made available only one day prior to this meeting. In general, we could say that there needs to be more detail concerning the implementation of the framework, which includes financing. If we wish to secure the resources necessary for the implementation of the framework, we must ensure that these are not provided at the expense of official development assistance, which has decreased over the past two years, or at the expense of achieving the Millennium Development Goals. We should ensure that the comprehensive framework for action is accepted by the Member States and, to achieve that and to ensure its relevance, it must be implemented and developed in keeping with the developments in the crisis and with the specific circumstances of the developing countries.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to emphasize the importance of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council in formulating an international strategy to achieve food security. That requires greater interaction between the Assembly and the Economic and Social Council and the High-Level Task Force set up for that purpose.

Ms. Aitimova (Kazakhstan): At the outset, I would like to thank you for the initiative in organizing this meeting and for inviting the Secretary-General to brief the General Assembly on the revised version of the comprehensive framework for action developed by the High-Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis.

It is true, as the comprehensive framework for action concludes, that the global food crisis poses

existing and potential dangers to households, Governments and the international system in terms of food and nutrition insecurity. Before the rapid rise in food prices, some 854 million people worldwide were already estimated to be undernourished. The crisis may drive another 100 million more people into poverty and hunger.

Kazakhstan shares the view that the current food crisis has been brought about by a number of closely interrelated factors such as food prices, vigorous population growth, biofuel production and climate change. As the causes of the crisis are numerous and intertwined, dealing with them requires a holistic and coherent approach. The international community should act in unison and consistently, and Governments, the United Nations system, development banks, non-governmental organizations, the scientific community and the private sector also have an important role to play in that common endeavour.

We believe that, first of all, it is important to ensure the expeditious disbursement of all pledged contributions to finance emergency food aid. All Member States should demonstrate the necessary political will and flexibility to bring about a new trade regime, one that would strengthen food security by promoting food production and investment in the agricultural sector of developing economies. In that regard, we underscore the necessity of intensifying efforts to complete the Doha Round of trade talks.

It is also important to ensure effective work by the international financial institutions and to review carefully programmes promoting biofuel use in order to prevent those programmes from undermining food security.

We strongly believe that there is an urgent need to develop closer regional cooperation that would promote partnerships at the macro and micro levels to mitigate the negative impact of the crisis and to strengthen food security.

At the international level, strengthened partnerships and increased actions by all stakeholders in a comprehensive, coordinated and coherent manner are critical, as many factors underlying the food crisis are global in nature and require actions across country and regional borders.

A clear mention should have been made in the comprehensive framework for action of subsidies and trade-distorting practices in the developed world as a major deterrent to agricultural development in the developing world. Kazakhstan would also like to stress that the issue of access to technology in order to increase agricultural food production and productivity in developing countries should be mentioned in the comprehensive framework for action.

The problems of food security and sustainable development have been addressed in various forums, including the high-level conference of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in Rome. We think that the main factor in achieving the goals that we set in order to find a way out of the prevailing situation is the political will of the leaders of all States to implement recommendations adopted in various forums in the past and the active support of international and regional organizations, including the United Nations.

In conclusion, I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his leadership in developing concrete responses to the food crises, and I assure the Assembly that Kazakhstan will continue its efforts to resolve this urgent and complex issue.

The Acting President: In accordance with General Assembly resolution 35/2 of 13 October 1980, I now call upon the Observer for the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization.

Ms. Contreras (Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization): The problem of inadequate food supply is not a new one for developing countries. Millions of people have suffered for decades from famine, and agricultural economies have always been subject to such natural disasters as droughts and floods. However, for a variety of reasons, the widespread and acute shortages of food that now confront us have provoked us to take determined and concerted action.

Globalization and interdependence mean that all countries, not just developing ones, will feel the effects of a diminishing food supply. At the same time, we have the knowledge and resources to attack this problem, and it is political will, more than a lack of resources, that prevents us from taking the necessary steps.

The Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization welcomes the comprehensive framework for action and considers securing the human right to adequate nutrition to be fundamental. We believe that

action to combat hunger should be carried out in accordance with the right of everyone to be free from hunger. We believe that the responsibility of ensuring that right lies with each country. Each State has a fundamental obligation to develop policies and strategies to eliminate hunger, relying on the principle of sustainability.

The impacts of the incorrect distribution and production of food that lead to hunger are felt from local to international levels, creating social, humanitarian, political and environmental problems and thus becoming a continuing global challenge. In that respect, each country and the international community should focus on building capacity to implement the legal framework for sustainable development across all sectors, as countries cannot deal with food security in isolation.

Furthermore, at the juncture between the issues of food security and energy is the issue of biofuels. Scientists now have determined that biofuels can be made from waste wood materials, cellulose and other non-food fibres. Devoting corn or other food resources and the croplands on which they are grown to the production of biofuels jeopardizes the food supply that comes from those commodities. Some Governments and United Nations bodies have been advocating the concept of food for fuel. That recommendation should be seriously reviewed. Therefore, the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization believes that it is important for States to consult together and develop an international consensus on the use and promotion of biofuels, and the use of techniques such as environmental impact assessments should contribute to that consensus.

While the importance of agriculture and grain to the world food supply should not be understated, we would like to have seen the comprehensive framework for action address the critical role of oceans in the world food supply, including fish stocks and the very real and severe threat of their depletion. Today, the United Nations Environment Programme estimates that 75 per cent of the world's fish stocks are exploited or over-exploited. The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment echoes the same warning: the world's capture fisheries are operating beyond sustainable demands.

Just last month, the ninth meeting of the United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea convened to discuss the topic of maritime safety and security. An emerging issue of vital importance to maritime security highlighted by the Consultative Process is the link between security issues, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and overfishing. In the context of food security, overfishing and illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing cannot be overlooked. Critical to this is the development of comprehensive integrated coastal zone management systems.

The work of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the World Food Programme have been focused on meeting famine relief objectives and other urgent needs for supplying food. What is needed is a more sustained and systematic building of capacity for producing and supplying food, from the scientific, socio-economic and legal perspectives. The Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization urges that those points of view be given greater emphasis.

Mr. Al-Ansari (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): Permit me at the outset to thank the President of the General Assembly for having taken the initiative to convene this important meeting to shed light on the critical situation facing the world's poor, who are suffering as a result of the global food crisis, with soaring food prices that are too high for them to afford. In particular, we thank him for having placed this item on the Organization's agenda, for engaging the international community in this review during a high-level debate of the General Assembly and for inviting the heads of State or Government who will participate in the Assembly at its forthcoming session to become involved in the discussion.

I also wish to thank the Secretary-General for his valuable statement, in which he examined the problem in all its aspects, discussed its imminent dangers and explained the measures required to address it. I take this opportunity to congratulate him on the initiative to establish the High-Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis, which has been mandated to promote a unified response to the global food crisis and to develop a framework for action and coordinate its implementation among the entities of the United Nations system and the Bretton Woods institutions.

My delegation associates itself with the statement made at the 112th plenary meeting by the representative of Antigua and Barbuda, which currently holds the chairmanship of the Group of 77 and China.

The food crisis is a reality that is negatively affecting the poor in urban and rural areas in the world's developing countries. The past three years have witnessed an astronomical rise in the prices of food commodities. During the first quarter of 2008, the price of wheat increased 130 per cent and the price of maize 30 per cent over 2007 levels. While the price of rice saw moderate increases in 2006 and 2007, it rose by 10 per cent in February 2008 and by a further 10 per cent in March.

Food commodity prices continue to skyrocket in developing countries. That situation requires coordinated action by the international community, in particular the United Nations. It has prompted the Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, to warn that "The rapidly escalating crisis of food availability around the world has reached emergency proportions". And, as Lennart Bage, President of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), recently stated:

> "Responding effectively to the impact of higher food prices must be a top priority for the global community, particularly when the impact is combined with the projected effects of climate change".

The time when there was easy access to food is long past. Today, the world is witnessing unprecedented price increases on the global food and grain markets. Current market analyses indicate that that trend will continue for the foreseeable future. Undoubtedly, this rise in food commodity prices will have detrimental effects on those living in dire poverty throughout the world. Food accounts for an average of 60 to 80 per cent of the daily expenditures of the poor. The situation grows even worse when one considers that there are more than 850 million poor people throughout the world. Soaring global food prices threaten to undermine the efforts being made to reduce poverty and could delay for many years the achievement of the related Millennium Development Goal in poor countries.

The staggering increase in food commodity prices is also expected to broaden the incidence of abject poverty by adding another 100 million people — including 39 million Africans — to the ranks of the extremely poor. It is a tragedy that the majority of the more than 2 billion people who live and work on smallholder farms are impoverished, struggling to live on less than $2 a day. Many of them are unable to benefit from the soaring prices of food commodities owing to their inability to obtain the fertilizers and seeds needed to boost their crop yields. Moreover, they are unable to gain access to markets because of poor road conditions and high transportation costs. Yet, despite the dizzying rise in food commodity prices, smallholder farmers have not reaped any of its benefits, as they are compelled to sell their crops at low prices in order to meet their needs, while still having to pay exorbitant prices to obtain food for themselves.

In our view, the crisis has multiple causes, including a shortage of agricultural commodities on world markets, adverse weather patterns, rising fuel prices, a considerable expansion in the production of biofuels and new restrictions imposed in many areas of international trade.

During the meeting of the Chief Executives Board held in Bern, Switzerland, on 28 and 29 April 2008, the heads of United Nations specialized agencies, funds and programmes and of the Bretton Woods institutions called for swift action to provide farmers in developing countries with the support necessary to see them through the next crop cycle. Therefore, we commend the IFAD initiative launched on 25 April 2008 to provide $200 million to increase agricultural production in developing countries in order to curb the rise in food prices and increase stocks of food commodities in global markets. We also appreciate the close cooperation and support provided by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the World Food Programme and IFAD to the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme and the New Partnership for Africa's Development.

The State of Qatar, which has continued to contribute effectively to global development efforts, will do its utmost to remain an effective actor in the global partnerships searching for radical solutions to the global food crisis.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item. The General Assembly has concluded its plenary meeting on the global food and energy crisis. The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 48.

The meeting rose at 11.30 a.m.

United Nations A/62/PV.115

General Assembly

Sixty-second session

Official Records

115th plenary meeting
Wednesday, 23 July 2008, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Kerim ..... (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Soborun (Mauritius), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 45 (*continued*)

Sport for peace and development

(a) Sport for peace and development

Draft resolution (A/62/L.46)

The Acting President: Members will recall that the Assembly held the debate on agenda item 45 and its sub-items (a) and (b) at its 40th plenary meeting, on 31 October 2007.

I now give the floor to the representative of Chile to introduce draft resolution A/62/L.46.

Mr. Muñoz (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Principality of Monaco, the Russian Federation, Switzerland and Chile — countries that have united their efforts to sponsor the draft resolution entitled "Sport as a means to promote education, health, development and peace", which we introduce today before this Assembly under agenda item 45 (a).

First, I would like to stress the strong commitment and resolve of the countries presenting the draft resolution to recognize sport as a constructive and effective vehicle for promoting peace and development and creating an environment of tolerance, dialogue and respect, which are essential in today's world.

The draft resolution welcomes the decision of the Secretary-General to renew the mandate of his Special Adviser on Sport for Development and Peace, a post recently assumed by Mr. Wilfried Lemke. The draft resolution also recognizes and stresses the particular consideration that the Secretary-General has assigned to the effective functioning of the Office of Sport for Development and Peace, for which a special voluntary Trust Fund has been established.

As the resolutions on this item have done in past years, the draft resolution requests information on the state of progress of policies and best practices on sport and physical education in the national, regional and global spheres.

Our draft enjoys the broad sponsorship of the membership. This morning, Costa Rica, Cuba, the Czech Republic, Israel, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, the Philippines, Portugal and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia signed up as additional sponsors, for which we thank them and are most grateful.

The draft resolution seeks not only to build resources and infrastructure for sport, but also something much more ambitious: the aspiration to create what we could call a global culture of sport and physical education. Such a culture should incorporate not only young people, adults and the elderly, but also athletes with disabilities, women and men, and people of developed and developing countries in order to improve and contribute to a healthier, less violent and more tolerant world.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

08-43536 (E)

We believe that those efforts should be supported not only by Governments, but also by leading world personalities, civil society and non-governmental organizations in order to achieve, through the establishment of efficient and realistic public policies, the promotion of sport and physical education at all levels. Although the promotion of such activities is the sovereign responsibility of each State, we must not overlook the concerted multilateral efforts whereby we have confirmed the growing need to achieve consensus on joint initiatives and share useful experiences in that area.

We wish to highlight at least two important events scheduled for this year that are connected to our work. First, in a few days the XXIX Olympic Games 2008 will begin in Beijing, a monumental occasion that we are certain will be a significant milestone in Olympic history. Moreover, in November, my country will host the Fédération internationale de football association Under-20 Women's World Cup, an event that our authorities consider to be a potent incentive for our youth to engage in healthy sport activities, while advocating gender issues. Furthermore, it is the first time that a women's world football tournament will be played in South America. Both events represent, among many other things, solid contributions to the promotion of sport and physical education at the international level.

Notwithstanding the progress achieved, we must pursue even more resolutely our efforts to disseminate and promote sport activities. In that context, we deem it necessary to generate new initiatives and understanding for the establishment of strategic alliances that result in the design of policies and the sufficient and predictable mobilization of resources for sport, in which the United Nations, the private sector, civil society, foundations, non-governmental organizations and sport federations play a central role.

By adopting the draft resolution before us today, we believe that the General Assembly would be contributing constructively to the international community, and especially to those vulnerable sectors afflicted by social exclusion, disease and the violence imposed by poverty. If we add in some measure thereby to the fulfilment of the Millennium Development Goals, we believe that our efforts will not have been in vain.

The Acting President: I should like to announce that, since the introduction of draft resolution A/62/L.46, Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Benin, Bolivia, Burundi, Cape Verde, Colombia, Croatia, Cuba, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Fiji, Guatemala, Guinea, Haiti, Indonesia, Iraq, Kenya, Maldives, Qatar, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Swaziland, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey, Ukraine and Viet Nam have become sponsors of the draft.

We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/62/L.46.

I call on the representative of Bolivia.

Mr. Siles Alvarado (Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Bolivia is proud to sponsor a draft resolution as important as that before us, which recommends the practice of sport to promote peace and good understanding among peoples.

We also take this opportunity to stress the importance of remembering the universality of sport. We should not seek to hinder the practice of sport under pretexts of a geographical or regional nature. Specifically, Bolivia notes the attempt by the Fédération internationale de football association to prohibit football matches from being played in high-altitude cities, which would undoubtedly run counter to the universal practice of sport.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take action on draft resolution A/62/L.46, entitled "Sport as a means to promote education, health, development and peace".

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/62/L.46?

Draft resolution A/62/L.46 was adopted (resolution 62/271).

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (a) of agenda item 45?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 7 (*continued*)

Organization of work, adoption of the agenda and allocation of items

The Acting President: The General Assembly will turn to a letter from the Chargé d'affaires ad interim of the Permanent Mission of Hungary to the

President of the General Assembly contained in document A/62/905, under sub-item (b) of agenda item 113, concerning the election of 29 members of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme.

Members will recall that the General Assembly concluded consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 113 at its 52nd plenary meeting on 15 November 2007. In order to enable the General Assembly to consider document A/62/905, it will be necessary to reopen consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 113. May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to reopen consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 113?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: May I further take it that the Assembly agrees to proceed immediately to the consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 113?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 113 (*continued*)

Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other elections

(b) Election of 29 members of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme

Letter from Hungary (A/62/905)

The Acting President: Members will recall that, at its 52nd plenary meeting on 15 November 2007, the General Assembly elected the 29 members of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme for a term of office beginning on 1 January 2008 and ending on 31 December 2011.

In that connection, I would like to draw the attention of members to document A/62/905 containing a letter dated 2 July 2008 from the Chargé d'affaires ad interim of the Permanent Mission of Hungary to the United Nations. In her letter, the Chargé d'affaires announces that Hungary would like to relinquish its seat on the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme as of 31 December 2008 for the remaining term, in favour of Serbia. As a result, a vacancy will occur and a new member must therefore be elected to fill the unexpired term of office of Hungary, commencing on 1 January 2009 and expiring on 31 December 2011.

In accordance with paragraph 1 of General Assembly resolution 2997 (XXVII), 15 December 1972, and taking into account that the vacancy will occur from among the Eastern European States, the new member should therefore be elected from that region. The President has been informed that the Group of Eastern European States has endorsed Serbia as a candidate for the vacancy.

As members are aware, in accordance with rule 92 of the rules of procedure, all elections shall be held by secret ballot and there shall be no nominations.

However, I should like to recall paragraph 16 of General Assembly decision 34/401, whereby the practice of dispensing with the secret ballot for elections to subsidiary organs when the number of candidates corresponds to the number of seats to be filled should become standard, unless a delegation specifically requests a vote on a given election.

In the absence of such a request, may I take it that the Assembly decides to proceed to the election on that basis?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: May I therefore take it that the Assembly wishes to declare Serbia elected a member of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme for a term of office beginning on 1 January 2009 and expiring on 31 December 2011?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: I congratulate Serbia on its election as a member of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 113?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 10.45 a.m.

peoples — goals that are also part of the founding values of the United Nations.

"As an expression of these common objectives, in 1998 the International Olympic Committee decided to fly the United Nations flag at all competition sites of the Olympic Games. The United Nations system and the International Olympic Committee have subsequently strengthened their mutual cooperation and support through joint endeavours in fields such as poverty alleviation, human and economic development, humanitarian assistance, education, health promotion and HIV/AIDS prevention, gender equality and environmental protection.

"As President of the General Assembly at its sixty-second session, I solemnly appeal to all Member States to demonstrate their commitment to the Olympic Truce for the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, and to undertake concrete actions at the local, national, regional and world levels to promote and strengthen a culture of peace and harmony based on the spirit of the Truce."

May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to take note of the solemn appeal in connection with the observance of the Olympic Truce?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 45 and of agenda item 45 as a whole?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 114 (*continued*)

Appointments to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other appointments

(i) Approval of the appointment of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

Note by the Secretary-General (A/62/913)

The Acting President: By its resolution 48/141 of 20 December 1993, the General Assembly decided to create the post of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. The Secretary-General proposes, in the light of the provisions of resolution 48/141 set out in his note, to appoint Ms. Navanethem Pillay of South Africa as United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights for a term of office of four years beginning on 1 September 2008 and expiring on 31 August 2012.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to approve the proposal of the Secretary-General to appoint Ms. Navanethem Pillay of South Africa as United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights for a term of office of four years beginning on 1 September 2008 and expiring on 31 August 2012?

It is so decided.

The Acting President: I call now on the representative of France, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Western European and other States.

Mr. Lacroix (France) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of Western European and other States.

The Group of Western European and other States welcomes the appointment by the Secretary-General of Ms. Navanethem Pillay to the post of United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. We welcome the fact that this high responsibility is being entrusted to a woman from a country of the South and, in particular, from Africa. In this year, when we celebrate the sixtieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, it is vital to reaffirm the universality and the indivisibility of human rights in all their aspects.

We are confident that Ms. Navanethem Pillay, who has especially distinguished herself in combating impunity in the past as President of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, and now as a judge of the International Criminal Court, will be particularly attentive to the need for universality, which is at the heart of her mandate. In that vital mission, the new High Commissioner can count on the full support of the Group of Western European and other States.

The Group of Western European and other States would also like to pay hearty tribute to the work done by Ms. Louise Arbour at the head of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. With a great sense of dialogue and exceptional determination, Ms. Arbour was able throughout her tenure to develop a relationship of trust with the new Human Rights Council. We welcome her unflagging commitment and convey to her our gratitude.

The Acting President: I call next on the representative of Ethiopia, who will speak on behalf of the Group of African States.

Mr. Botora (Ethiopia): It is my distinct honour and pleasure to speak on behalf of the African Group of States in this special meeting of the General Assembly convened to consider, among other things, the approval of the appointment of a distinguished African daughter — Judge Navanethem Pillay — to one of the high posts of the United Nations — High Commissioner for Human Rights. It is indeed an important appointment, which recognizes the significant role played by Judge Pillay in the international legal and human rights arena. The appointment is also a concrete expression of the fact that Africa has continued to become, more than ever before, a decisive force in international affairs. In that regard, I wish to express our heartfelt appreciation to the Secretary-General for his recognition of Judge Pillay's important work in upholding the principles of the rule of law and in the defence of human rights and, through her, the importance of Africa's contribution to the protection, respect and promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The world today is still in the process of profound and complex changes. The challenges of climate change, rising food and energy prices and the upswing in conflicts and violence are confronting our world in an unprecedented manner. Those challenges have a direct bearing on the international efforts to create a world order in which the basic rights of human beings are protected and promoted without any discrimination whatsoever. Such a world is critical to the full realization of the fundamental principles and goals set forth by the United Nations Charter for the maintenance of international peace and economic and social development.

Within that context, it is obvious that Judge Pillay's new job is most difficult and challenging and demands the full backing and cooperation of the international community. We are confident that Africa and the rest of the international community will stand at her side and extend the necessary support to her in accomplishing the important task entrusted to her by the world body.

Judge Pillay is one of South Africa's leading female jurists and has dedicated her life to the cause of upholding the rule of law and human rights. Her contributions to the struggle to end the apartheid regime, her achievements as a successful lawyer of human rights and as the first female attorney in her province, and her work at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda and the International Criminal Court bear witness to that. We believe that her appointment will afford her another great opportunity to bring the weight of her experience to bear on the efforts being employed by the international community to bring about a world of peace, justice and equality.

Today, we witness with agony the many human rights violations that gravely affect the fabric of international society. Despite the fact that we have succeeded in putting in place institutions and mechanisms to defend and promote human rights, at both the international and the national levels, human beings throughout the world, to varying degrees, have continued to suffer from violations of their dignity, basic rights and freedoms. In view of that grave peril, the world community should take concrete measures to guarantee the full protection, respect and enjoyment of human rights and freedoms for all. This is the time to renew our commitment and to redouble our efforts on behalf of the noble cause of human rights as we celebrate the sixtieth anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The United Nations cannot discharge its full responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security or for achieving sustainable socio-economic development if proper and appropriate attention is not accorded to human rights. It is therefore fitting to appoint Judge Pillay to this supreme and challenging post, as her commitment to the defence and promotion of human rights and her integrity and personality are well recognized internationally.

In conclusion, I wish to take this opportunity to congratulate Judge Pillay on her appointment to this high post and once again to reiterate our appreciation to the Secretary-General for his judgement and right choice in nominating her as High Commissioner for Human Rights.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Barbados, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States.

Mrs. Francis-Vaughan (Barbados): Barbados has the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States on the occasion of the

approval by the General Assembly of the appointment of Judge Navanethem Pillay of South Africa to the post of United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. The Group congratulates Judge Pillay and welcomes her appointment to that important post within the United Nations system.

In welcoming Judge Pillay, the Group also wishes to extend its sincerest gratitude and appreciation to her predecessor, High Commissioner Louise Arbour, for her dedicated and distinguished service in leading the United Nations human rights efforts.

Judge Pillay easily exceeds the criteria for appointment to that post, as set out in resolution 48/141. Judge Pillay brings to that post wisdom and experience gained in over four decades in the area of law and human rights. From her early work in South Africa, where she represented many opponents of apartheid, to her more recent work as a judge on the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda and, later, the International Criminal Court, Judge Pillay has demonstrated a deep commitment to upholding the principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The Group is confident that, given Judge Pillay's outstanding reputation and demonstrated ability as a leader and advocate for human rights, she will ensure that the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights fully delivers on its mandate to promote and protect the enjoyment and full realization by all people of all the rights established in the Charter of the United Nations.

The Group pledges its support and cooperation to the High Commissioner in the discharge of her duties and responsibilities and once again offers her our heartfelt congratulations.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Cuba, who will speak on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Mrs. Núñez Mordoche (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): I am privileged to speak on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement on this occasion as the Assembly is meeting to approve the appointment of Ms. Navanethem Pillay as the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

The Non-Aligned Movement takes this opportunity to congratulate Ms. Pillay on her appointment. The Non-Aligned Movement would like to welcome her and offer her our full support and cooperation. She is an illustrious representative of South Africa, which is an emblematic and staunch member of our Movement. The Non-Aligned Movement fully believes that Ms. Pillay will meet the major political challenges ahead of her as a result of her new and important responsibilities. We are convinced that she will promote the implementation of the tenets of the Non-Aligned Movement, which reject and condemn selectivity and double standards in the promotion and protection of human rights, and ensure that human rights will not be exploited for political reasons.

We are all aware of the enormous challenge Judge Pillay faces in fulfilling her mandate. However, her proven and well-known qualities will ensure her complete success in her task. Moreover, we fully believe that Ms. Pillay, as a noble daughter of the African continent, will continue to use the age-old wisdom of her people to strengthen the system of United Nations cooperation in promoting human rights and resolving any issues that confront her.

The Movement of Non-Aligned Countries also expresses its gratitude for the work undertaken by Ms. Louise Arbour as United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights; with her experience and her skill, she contributed to the cause of strengthening United Nations cooperation on human rights. Ms. Arbour will always be remembered as the High Commissioner who brought change and achieved the complex and sensitive establishment of the new Human Rights Council. On this occasion, we also recall all her efforts and the process that she has already initiated for celebrating the sixtieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

On behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, I wish Ms. Louise Arbour every success in her future endeavours and her personal life. We also wish Judge Navanethem Pillay every success as the new High Commissioner for Human Rights, and reiterate the full support and cooperation of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. The Movement reiterates its commitment to promoting a world of dignity and respect for all, and we reaffirm that we shall continue to work with all those committed to making cooperation on the defence of human rights throughout the world a reality.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Estonia, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Eastern European States.

Mrs. Intelmann (Estonia): I have the honour to take the floor on behalf of the members of the Group of Eastern European States and, on behalf of the Group, I would like to congratulate Judge Pillay on her appointment. Her distinguished career and outstanding reputation give us confidence that she will be a courageous and vocal High Commissioner.

I would also like to take this opportunity to extend sincere gratitude and appreciation to High Commissioner Louise Arbour for her very dedicated service. Members of the Group of Eastern European States pledge their support and cooperation to the new High Commissioner.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of South Africa.

Mr. Kumalo (South Africa): On behalf of South Africa, allow me to express our deep gratitude to the members of the General Assembly for unanimously approving the appointment of Judge Navanethem Pillay as the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights for a term of office of four years beginning 1 September 2008 and expiring on 31 August 2012. At the same time, we wish to pay tribute to Ms. Louise Arbour, the outgoing United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, for her sterling work.

The General Assembly has endorsed someone who for many years lived under the cruel system of apartheid and, as a lawyer and human rights activist, stood up without fear or favour to represent its countless victims, especially the political prisoners on Robben Island. Judge Pillay was responsible for one of the landmark rulings against the apartheid system, in which Robben Island prisoners were allowed visits from their lawyers and families, thereby exposing the inhuman conditions for those held in apartheid jails.

Judge Pillay's advocacy for human rights has not been limited to South Africa. She is an internationally renowned jurist, who has served as a judge of the South African High Court, a founding judge and later President of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, and Judge of the International Criminal Court.

In the Rwanda Tribunal, Judge Pillay sentenced to life imprisonment Mr. Jean-Paul Akayesu, who was convicted of genocide, crimes against humanity and rape. That judgement was the first pronouncement on genocide by an international court since the Genocide Convention of 1948. The judgement defined, for the first time, the legal elements of the crime of genocide and the criteria constituting the categories of national, religious, racial and ethnic groups. The judgement also set a precedent by convicting Mr. Akayesu of rape as an act of genocide after having found that rapes were perpetrated against Tutsi women with the intention of the destruction of the Tutsi ethnic group.

Sixty years ago, the Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. That common standard of achievement, as it was called in 1948, placed the equality, dignity and worth of the human person at the core of the international community's attention. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights exhorts us to promote respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and, by progressive measures, both internationally and nationally, to secure their universal recognition and observance.

Fifteen years ago, in 1993, the General Assembly adopted the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action. The Declaration affirms the right to development as a universal and inalienable right and an integral part of fundamental human rights. At the same time, the Assembly created the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to spearhead the campaign of translating those ideals into reality.

The High Commissioner is the principal United Nations official mandated with promoting and protecting the enjoyment of all human rights by all. That includes dealing with the challenges to the full realization of human rights, as well as preventing the continuation of human rights violations throughout the world. The achievement of that mandate requires a person of high moral standing and personal integrity.

Judge Pillay brings personal experience, knowledge and the courage to fight for the promotion and protection of all human rights, including the right to development. The independence and fearlessness that Judge Pillay has demonstrated assure us of her commitment to put the individual at the centre of the human rights agenda. Her knowledge and her practical experience of working internationally with diverse

cultures confirm that the Secretary-General has made the right choice and, indeed, that the General Assembly has taken the correct position by unanimously endorsing Judge Pillay. For us South Africans, we simply wish to thank the Secretary-General and the Members of the Assembly, particularly the Non-Aligned Movement and the other groups that have spoken this morning, for having faith in one of us. In doing so, they have honoured all of us.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (i) of agenda item 114 and agenda item 114 as a whole?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 7 (*continued*)

Organization of work, adoption of the agenda and allocation of items

The Acting President: Representatives will recall that, at its 3rd plenary meeting on 21 September 2007, the General Assembly allocated agenda item 137 to the Fifth and Sixth Committees. In order to enable the General Assembly to consider document A/62/914, containing a letter from the Permanent Representative of Germany to the President of the General Assembly under agenda item 137, it will be necessary to consider that item directly in plenary meeting.

May I take it that the Assembly agrees to consider this item directly in plenary meeting?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: May I further take it that the Assembly agrees to proceed immediately to the consideration of agenda item 137?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 137 (*continued*)

Administration of justice at the United Nations

Letter dated 9 July 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Germany addressed to the President of the General Assembly (A/62/914)

The Acting President: In his letter, the Permanent Representative of Germany requests the re-establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Administration of Justice at the United Nations for one meeting, to be held on one day between 21 July and 7 August 2008, for the sole purpose of taking note of the oral report of the coordinator on the informal intersessional consultations and to request the Secretary-General to issue the coordinator's summary entitled "Coordinator's summary of the preliminary observations made in the informal consultations on the draft statute of the United Nations Dispute Tribunal and the United Nations Appeals Tribunal" as an addendum to the report of the Ad Hoc Committee (document A/63/55).

May I therefore take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to re-establish the Ad Hoc Committee on the Administration of Justice at the United Nations for one meeting, for the sole purpose of taking note of the oral report of the coordinator on the informal intersessional consultations and to request the Secretary-General to issue the coordinator's summary entitled "Coordinator's summary of the preliminary observations made in the informal consultations on the draft statute of the United Nations Dispute Tribunal and the United Nations Appeals Tribunal" as an addendum to the report of the Ad Hoc Committee (document A/63/55)?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 137.

Agenda item 168

Extension of the terms of the judges of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Genocide and Other Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of Rwanda and Rwandan Citizens Responsible for Genocide and Other Such Violations Committed in the Territory of Neighbouring States between 1 January and 31 December 1994

Letter from the Secretary-General (A/62/896)

Letter from the President of the Security Council (A/62/910)

The Acting President: In document A/62/896, the Secretary-General transmitted a letter dated 6 June 2008 from Judge Dennis Byron, President of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, in which he seeks authorization for an extension of the terms of office of nine permanent judges and eight ad litem

judges, whose terms expire on 31 December 2008. The President of the Tribunal seeks for each of those judges an extension to 31 December 2009, or until the completion of the cases to which they are assigned if sooner. As a contingency against the unexpected, he also seeks an extension to 31 December 2009 of the terms of the remaining nine ad litem judges who are not yet appointed to serve the Tribunal.

As the statute of the International Tribunal does not provide for extending the term of office of the permanent or ad litem judges, the approval of the Security Council, as the parent organ of the International Tribunal, and of the General Assembly, as the organ that elects its judges, would be needed.

In document A/62/910, the President of the Security Council transmits to the President of the General Assembly the text of Council resolution 1824 (2008) of 18 July 2008, whereby the Council, inter alia:

> "1. Decides to extend the term of office of the following permanent judges at the Tribunal who are members of the Appeals Chamber until 31 December 2010, or until the completion of the cases before the Appeals Chamber if sooner:
>
> – Mr. Mehmet Güney (Turkey)
>
> – Ms. Andrésia Vaz (Senegal)
>
> "2. Decides to extend the term of office of the following permanent judges at the Tribunal who are members of the Trial Chambers until 31 December 2009, or until the completion of the cases to which they are assigned if sooner:
>
> – Mr. Charles Michael Dennis Byron (Saint Kitts and Nevis)
>
> – Mr. Asoka de Silva (Sri Lanka)
>
> – Mr. Sergei Alekseevich Egorov (Russian Federation)
>
> – Ms. Khalida Rachid Khan (Pakistan)
>
> – Mr. Erik Møse (Norway)
>
> – Ms. Arlette Ramaroson (Madagascar)
>
> – Mr. William Hussein Sekule (United Republic of Tanzania)
>
> "3. Decides to extend the term of office of the following ad litem judges, currently serving at the Tribunal, until 31 December 2009, or until the completion of the cases to which they are assigned if sooner:
>
> – Ms. Florence Rita Arrey (Cameroon)
>
> – Ms. Solomy Balungi Bossa (Uganda)
>
> – Ms. Taghrid Hikmet (Jordan)
>
> – Mr. Vagn Joensen (Denmark)
>
> – Mr. Gberdao Gustave Kam (Burkina Faso)
>
> – Mr. Lee Gacuiga Muthoga (Kenya)
>
> – Mr. Seon Ki Park (Republic of Korea)
>
> – Mr. Emile Francis Short (Ghana)
>
> "4. Decides to extend the term of office of the following ad litem judges, who have not yet been appointed to serve at the Tribunal, until 31 December 2009, or until the completion of any cases to which they may be assigned if sooner:
>
> – Mr. Aydin Sefa Akay (Turkey)
>
> – Ms. Karin Hökborg (Sweden)
>
> – Ms. Flavia Lattanzi (Italy)
>
> – Mr. Kenneth Machin (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)
>
> – Mr. Joseph Edward Chiondo Masanche (United Republic of Tanzania)
>
> – Tan Sri Dato' Hj. Mohd. Azmi Dato' Hj. Kamaruddin (Malaysia)
>
> – Mr. Mparany Mamy Richard Rajohnson (Madagascar)
>
> – Mr. Albertus Henricus Johannes Swart (Netherlands)
>
> – Ms. Aura E. Guerra de Villalaz (Panama).

If there is no objection, I propose that the Assembly decide to endorse this recommendation of the Secretary-General, which was endorsed by the Security Council in its resolution 1824 (2008) of 18 July 2008, and that it take effect as of 1 January 2009.

It was so decided.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 168?

It was so decided.

Statement by the President

The Acting President: Before concluding, I wish to announce that this is the last meeting of the General Assembly for Ms. Margie Kam, Senior Political Affairs Officer of the General Assembly Affairs Branch of the Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Management. Ms. Kam has worked at the United Nations for more than 30 years, the majority of which have been associated with the work of the plenary of the General Assembly. Her contribution to the smooth running of meetings of the Assembly has been truly significant, and I would like the Assembly to give her a round of applause in appreciation. We wish her all the best.

The meeting rose at 11.05 a.m.

United Nations A/62/PV.117

General Assembly

Sixty-second session

Official Records

117th plenary meeting
Thursday, 4 September 2008, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Kerim ..... (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Tribute to the memory of His Excellency Levy Patrick Mwanawasa, President of the Republic of Zambia

The President: It is my sad duty to pay tribute to the memory of the late President of the Republic of Zambia, His Excellency Mr. Levy Patrick Mwanawasa, who passed away on Tuesday, 19 August 2008.

On behalf of the General Assembly, I request the representative of Zambia to convey our condolences to the Government and the people of Zambia and to the bereaved family of His Excellency Mr. Levy Patrick Mwanawasa.

I now invite representatives to stand and observe a minute of silence in tribute to the memory of His Excellency Mr. Levy Patrick Mwanawasa.

The members of the General Assembly observed a minute of silence.

The President: I now give the floor to the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon.

The Secretary-General: It is with great sadness that I add my voice to those of all present in paying tribute to the late President of Zambia, Mr. Levy Patrick Mwanawasa. Like all of us, I was saddened by his sudden passing.

As Vice-President and later President, Mr. Mwanawasa was at the forefront of Zambian politics at a time of exceptional challenge and change in his country and in the southern African region as a whole. He was also a good friend of the Organization.

Four years ago, addressing the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session, he expressed strong support for an effective United Nations and stressed the need to take advantage of what he called the immense problem-solving potential of multilateralism. For that sentiment and much else, his voice resonated in these halls, and I know we shall all miss his presence in the world arena.

I profoundly admired his contribution as Chair of the Southern African Development Community, in particular in leading the efforts of the international community to restore democracy in Zimbabwe. My own personal interaction with him in numerous telephone calls and meetings were always instructive and valuable.

I again extend my profound condolences to the family of President Mwanawasa and to the people and Government of Zambia at this difficult time. I wish the people of Zambia vision, courage and fortitude in the time ahead.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of India, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Asian States.

Mr. Sen (India): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the States members of the Asian Group to pay a tribute to a great son of Africa, the late President Levy Patrick Mwanawasa of Zambia, who passed away on 19 August.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

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President Mwanawasa was more than a distinguished statesman and a visionary leader. He was also a committed democrat. His years of service to the people of Zambia were marked by his staunch commitment to the ideals of representative Government and selfless public service, a point that was also noted by the Secretary-General earlier. His tenure at the helm was marked by an impressive record of economic growth with low inflation, which began the process of making Zambia an economic success story.

President Mwanawasa will be remembered by his people and by the world for his tireless promotion of human rights, democracy and good governance, as well as for his consistent humility. Beyond his service to his own country, President Mwanawasa's vision was exemplified by a commitment to the larger calls of peace and stability on the African continent. His years of service were distinguished by the courage of his convictions and the force of his personal example. Astute diplomacy and wisdom were among the hallmarks of his leadership style.

President Mwanawasa will be remembered for his invaluable contribution to conflict resolution and peacemaking in Africa. The tragic departure of President Mwanawasa deprives Zambia, Africa and the world at large of an outstanding leader. The international community, and in particular the Organization, are poorer at this juncture, for in his passing we have lost a leader whose vision exemplified the high ideals and principles of the Organization.

On behalf of the members of the Asian Group, I extend our heartfelt condolences to the people and Government of Zambia on their tragic loss. It is one that we share as members of the international community. Our deepest sympathies and prayers are with the family of the departed leader. The Asian Group stands in solidarity with the people and Government of Zambia at this tragic juncture in their history. However, we are convinced that the people of Zambia have the strength and resilience to persist on the path of peace, progress and prosperity, and thereby burnish the legacy of this great son of Africa.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Guinea, who will speak on behalf of the Group of African States.

Mr. Sow (Guinea) (*spoke in French*): It is with deep emotion that I speak on behalf of the African States before the Assembly, which is meeting to honour the memory of the late President Levy Patrick Mwanawasa of the Republic of Zambia.

Allow me to express the African Group's gratitude to you, Sir, for this felicitous initiative, which reflects the international community's recognition of Africa and the fate of its illustrious leaders.

The African Group learned, with great sadness and deep pain, of the premature demise of the President of Zambia in Paris last Tuesday, 19 August, at the age of 59. Having collapsed in Sharm el-Sheikh, at a meeting of the African Union, at which he held both the presidency of Zambia and the chairmanship of the Southern African Development Community, in the end Mr. Mwanawasa died on the frontlines of Africa's struggle to achieve its political, economic and social development.

Elected to lead his country in 2002 and re-elected in 2006, the late Levy Patrick Mwanawasa, third President of Zambia since the country's accession to independence in 1964, was the very picture of an African leader of great vision, completely devoted to the cause of his people, who contributed to building peace, stability and prosperity in Zambia and in the region. Zambia today is proud of its very promising macroeconomic position, with growth rates of over 6 per cent and currency reserves of over $1 billion.

We pay tribute to President Mwanawasa for his successful work and for his tireless struggle against poverty and corruption. President Mwanawasa rightly earned the respect and gratitude of the African and international communities for his unflagging efforts to promote and maintain the values of good governance and hope-bringing democracy in an ever-changing continent. In that regard, he made a tremendous contribution to disseminating the values and ideals of the African continent and the United Nations.

The African Group also expresses its gratitude for the perseverance and determination shown by President Mwanawasa in building the bases for peace, integration and regionally integrated growth as the acting Chair of the Southern African Development Community. In paying tribute to that great African leader, the African Group continues to believe that the people of Zambia, inspired by the life, action and devotion of the late President, will remain united in solidarity on their path towards democratic and economic development in that country and in the region.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate our deep sympathy and condolences to the family of President Mwanawasa and to the people and Government of his country. The African Group calls upon the international community to maintain, enhance and extend its well-deserved support to the people of Zambia so that they can continue the process of building a prosperous, united and dynamic country, in full social peace and harmony.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Eastern European States.

Mr. Prica (Bosnia and Herzegovina): It is my sad duty to address the Assembly, in my capacity as the Chairman of the Group of Eastern European States for this month, on the occasion of the death of His Excellency Mr. Levy Patrick Mwanawasa, President of Zambia and Chairperson of the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

President Mwanawasa was born on 3 September 1948, which means that he would have celebrated his 60th birthday yesterday. Instead, Zambia mourned its great leader. With deep sorrow on behalf of the Group, I would like to convey my condolences to the family and friends of the late President and to the people and Government of Zambia. It is a truly great loss for the African Union, the entire African continent and the democratic world as a whole.

President Mwanawasa had numerous professional distinctions, having practised law after graduating from the University of Zambia in 1973 before going into Government service. Among them was certainly becoming the first Zambian lawyer to be appointed advocate and solicitor of the Supreme Court of England and Wales.

It is widely known that he did not tolerate injustice in any form. A former lawyer, after becoming a president in 2002, Mr. Mwanawasa was regarded as one of Africa's most progressive leaders. His fight against corruption was recognized by many, turning the southern African nation into one of the continent's economic success stories. Under his rule, Zambia enjoyed strong economic growth.

As Chairman of SADC, President Mwanawasa worked tirelessly to uphold the values of good governance, speaking out against human rights abuses and threats to democracy when many others were silent. He also played a key role in the struggle to end apartheid in South Africa. He was a lawyer with a steely determination to right wrongs and fight corruption and injustice, and a President who served his noble nation with pride at a time of outstanding challenges and change in his country. The entire nation has lost a great man with strong vision and leadership.

Once again, I convey my deepest condolences on behalf of the Group to the family of the late President and the people and Government of Zambia. May he rest in peace.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Bolivia, who will speak on behalf of the Latin American and Caribbean Group.

Mr. Siles Alvarado (Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): It is an honour to speak on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States. Allow me to extend our most sincere condolences to the people and Government of Zambia on the occasion of the tragic passing of the late President of that brother African country, His Excellency Mr. Levy Patrick Mwanawasa, last month.

His exemplary public life, his honour as an African politician, which was inherited from the spirit of his tribe, the Lenje, led him to be elected to lead the multiparty democratic movement as President of Zambia in 2001 and re-elected in 2006. His career in Government, guided by a vocation of service to the cause of his people and the fullest respect for law, was exemplified in his fight against corruption. His leadership and determination in efforts to combat violence allowed his country to join the group of African countries that embarked upon a promising course of economic and social development. The establishment of a social security system was one of the most significant achievements for his people.

Africa has lost one of its great leaders, and the Latin American and Caribbean Group pays tribute to Mr. Levy Patrick Mwanawasa for serving his people with dignity and honour. Allow me to call on the Permanent Mission of Zambia to transmit, on behalf of the Group, our sincerest condolences to the family of President Mwanawasa for the irreparable loss of their loved one.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Greece, who will speak on behalf of the Western European and other States Group.

Mr. Mourikis (Greece): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the members of the Group of Western European and other States. It is with deep sorrow that we mourn the passing of His Excellency Mr. Levy Patrick Mwanawasa, late President of the Republic of Zambia.

On behalf of the Western European and other States Group, I would like to convey my deepest condolences to the Government and the people of Zambia. Our condolences also go to the family of Mr. Mwanawasa. At this difficult time, our thoughts and prayers are with the people of the Republic of Zambia, whom the President served with commitment and honour.

President Mwanawasa was a visionary leader who will be long remembered and admired for his contribution to economic development, good governance, regional peace, stability and respect for the rule of law. He was a strong advocate for multiparty democracy, and his legacy provides an example to leaders who follow in his steps. He promoted democracy in his country and made great efforts to reduce poverty through solid economic programme and reforms. It is well-known that President Mwanawasa did not tolerate injustice in any form. He did his utmost for the development of the African continent and made a great contribution to Zambia's standing in the world, as can be attested by all the Group's members.

The late President won the confidence of the international community through his economic reforms and national initiatives against corruption, which permitted Zambia to enjoy considerable economic growth and to achieve debt relief. Furthermore, in the framework of the Southern African Development Community, he took significant initiatives for progress in the region.

May the late President's soul rest in peace. We all hope that the Government and the people of Zambia will overcome their sadness and continue to make progress towards the further prosperity of their country.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the United States, who will speak on behalf of the host country.

Mr. Khalilzad (United States of America): I stand before the General Assembly with several emotions. I am saddened by the untimely death of President Levy Patrick Mwanawasa. It is a loss to his family, especially his wife Maureen, but his death is also a loss to his country, Zambia, the African continent and the world.

While mourning his death, I celebrate his achievements and his many contributions. President Mwanawasa served his country well. He dedicated himself to improving the lives of the people of Zambia. He was a champion of good governance and democracy. As President, he launched a sweeping campaign against corruption. Together with his First Lady, he led ambitious programmes to combat malaria and HIV/AIDS. He was a great leader because he was a good servant of his people.

I also celebrate his contributions to Africa. He brought strong and energetic leadership to his role as Chairman of the Southern African Development Community, speaking out against human rights abuses and working to address the crisis in Zimbabwe. His principled and dedicated mediation efforts over the past year were instrumental in advancing the organization's work to promote peace and stability in the region. In helping his country and his continent, President Mwanawasa has helped the world, as we live in a global village and each of us is our neighbour's keeper.

We in the United States treasured his friendship. His legacy provides an example to us all. He will be dearly missed. On behalf of the United States, I extend sincere condolences to President Mwanawasa's wife, Maureen, his family and all Zambians during this difficult time. Lastly, we wish the people of Zambia and the country's leadership all the best. We wish them security, freedom and prosperity.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Zambia.

Mrs. Tembo (Zambia): On behalf of the Zambian Government and the Zambian people, I would like to express to you, Mr. President, our sincere gratitude for the great honour of paying tribute to the memory of the late President of the Republic of Zambia, His Excellency Mr. Levy Patrick Mwanawasa, State Counsel, who died on 19 August 2008 in France after suffering a stroke in June at the African Union Summit in Egypt.

As we stand here today, we mourn the loss of a distinguished statesman who will be fondly remembered for championing good governance, the rule of law and the fight against corruption. He also went the extra mile to demand of those in his New Deal Administration honesty, commitment and loyalty to Zambia and its people.

President Mwanawasa practised law from 1973, becoming a distinguished lawyer who, in 1992, was conferred with the status of State Counsel in Zambia. He also contributed immensely to litigation and law development in Zambia. Another distinction he achieved was that of becoming, in 1989, the first Zambian lawyer to be appointed advocate and solicitor of the Supreme Court of England and Wales.

Not only was President Mwanawasa concerned about the welfare of Zambians, but he also desired to see peace and development on the entire African continent and the subregion of the Southern African Development Community (SADC). From January to July 2002, he chaired the Organization of African Unity at the time of its transition to the African Union. President Mwanawasa was Chair of SADC from August 2007 to 17 August 2008, when Zambia handed over that role to South Africa.

On what turned out to be his last day alive in Zambia, on 28 June 2008, President Mwanawasa officiated at the Conference of the Association of Member Episcopal Conferences in Eastern Africa in Lusaka, where he spread the message of reconciliation and thanked God for the great gift of peace in the country.

Mr. Mwanawasa was born on 3 September 1948 and was married with six children. He was buried on 3 September 2008 at Embassy Park in Lusaka on the day that would have been his sixtieth birthday. The overwhelming messages of condolences and the large turnout of foreign dignitaries at the burial of President Mwanawasa are testimony to his great leadership.

We would like to express our profound gratitude to the Governments of France and Egypt for their assistance during the illness and bereavement of the late Mr. Mwanawasa. My sincere thanks also go to the Secretary-General and to the representatives of the regional groups and of the host country who have paid tribute in honour of the late President of the Republic of Zambia.

Agenda item 118

The United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy

Report of the Secretary-General (A/62/898)

Draft resolution (A/62/L.48)

Statement by the President

The President: It is my pleasure to welcome participants to this meeting of the General Assembly to mark the first review of the implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. The Strategy, which was adopted unanimously by the General Assembly two years ago, is a testament to the determination of Member States to strengthen the international front to counter terrorism and to increase the role of the United Nations in that regard.

The continued terrorist attacks serve as a stark reminder that terrorism continues to be one of the most serious threats to international peace and security. Acts of terrorism are direct attacks against the values on which the United Nations is founded. They deny the virtues of humanity, dignity and mutual respect for others. Terrorism knows no borders and affects us all. There can be no justification for the senseless and indiscriminate use of violence, and it is our duty to counter it in a unified and resolute manner. Only thus can we honour the memory of the victims of such heinous acts and show solidarity with their loved ones.

As members know, I have made the implementation of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy one of the priorities of the General Assembly at its sixty-second session. Throughout the session, we have been engaged in finding ways to best improve our efforts to carry out the commitments set out in the Strategy. Last December, we engaged in an informal midterm assessment of the various measures undertaken by the United Nations as well as by Member States. It was the first time since the adoption of the Strategy that Member States had brought their actions to the Assembly's attention. The meeting sent a clear message that Member States want to take the lead in implementation, with action-oriented partnerships.

I would like to commend the Secretary-General on his continued leadership and to express my gratitude for his comprehensive report on the activities of the United Nations system in implementing the Strategy (A/62/898). The report served as an important

and useful contribution to our deliberations before today's meeting.

I have sought to make sure that there are appropriate avenues of dialogue between the General Assembly and the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force in order to keep the membership informed of the developments on which the United Nations system has embarked. I commend Assistant Secretary-General Robert Orr, Chair of the Task Force, for his efforts in carrying out that important function, and I thank him for his continued cooperation during the present session.

During this session, our focus has also been on the various related challenges that have a place in the Global Strategy. Fostering dialogue among cultures and religions, advancing the Millennium Development Goals and promoting the notion of human security are means by which we can address the conditions that are conducive to the spreading of terrorism.

In May, I appointed Ambassador Gert Rosenthal, Permanent Representative of Guatemala, as a facilitator to consult with Member States on the outcome of this meeting. I wish to express my sincere appreciation to Ambassador Rosenthal for his skilful stewardship of the negotiations on the draft resolution and to all delegations for their constructive and focused participation.

The draft resolution to be adopted contains a strong condemnation of terrorism and a reaffirmation of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. It stresses the need for international cooperation against that international threat. It underlines the need for sustained efforts by Member States, which bear the primary responsibility for carrying out the necessary measures, as well as by the United Nations and other appropriate international, regional and subregional organizations.

There is clearly a need to work closely with regional and subregional organizations, which have special knowledge concerning the vulnerabilities and priorities of their own regions. The United Nations should work with States to bolster those regional bodies that do not yet have sufficient counter-terrorism capacity.

The draft resolution also underlines the important part that civil society plays in determining how to enhance the efforts to implement the Strategy. Indeed, civil society is a valuable partner for Governments in ensuring the sustainability of their efforts on the ground.

The draft resolution calls upon the relevant United Nations entities to continue to facilitate the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism, and recalls that all measures to prevent and combat terrorism must be undertaken in compliance with international law, in particular human rights and refugee law, as well as with international humanitarian law.

The draft also reminds us of the pivotal role that the General Assembly has played in adopting international legal instruments to counter terrorism. All Member States should strive to become parties to those instruments. In that regard, I am pleased to note that, since the adoption of the Strategy, the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism has entered into force.

Those instruments now need to be complemented with a comprehensive convention on international terrorism in order to send a clear message to those who seek to undermine our human security and our freedom. I have been encouraged by some of the progress made in the Ad Hoc Committee during the present session, but we need true political will to resolve the outstanding issues.

The draft resolution also urges the Secretary-General to make the necessary arrangements to carry out the institutionalization of the Task Force in accordance with the Strategy. I commend the Governments that have provided resources to the Task Force, but it is still essential to ensure stable and sustainable central support. I am confident that the Secretary-General will continue to address that issue in a resolute manner, as requested by Member States.

One of the vital issues during this session has been the interaction between the Assembly and the Task Force. I have made efforts to approach that matter in a pragmatic manner through informal briefings by the Task Force to the General Assembly and through the dissemination of information. The draft resolution provides for the General Assembly to interact with the Task Force on a regular basis in order to receive briefings and reports, to assess the work accomplished and to offer policy guidance. I am confident that the dialogue between the General Assembly and the United

Nations system will continue to improve in future sessions.

It is also my pleasure to note that, in two years, at its sixty-fourth session, the General Assembly will examine the implementation of the Strategy and consider updating it to respond to changes. Indeed, that is an ongoing effort. We must continue to find means of cooperation, and we can use the Strategy as a reference point for embarking on such common efforts.

I am convinced that this General Assembly meeting will serve as an opportunity to present our national experiences and share best practices in countering terrorism in an integrated manner. Through the exchange of those experiences, we can identify priorities and areas where all of us can work together and add value. By finding gaps and identifying areas where further assistance is needed, we can build closer cooperation between Member States and the United Nations system.

Two years ago, the General Assembly assumed the responsibility for strengthening the Organization's response to terrorism by giving us a platform for furthering our common efforts. By implementing the Global Strategy, we will strengthen the United Nations and reassert the role of the General Assembly by making it capable not only of fulfilling our ideals and expectations, but also of delivering concrete results.

Throughout this session, I have emphasized the need for a new kind of internationalism that caters to a new kind of global society based on principled pragmatism and shared responsibility — a new way of thinking about our shared fate in a manner that reflects the complexities of contemporary human and economic relations, with the well-being of individuals and communities at its centre. We need a more active and coherent United Nations system and stronger engagement by all members of the General Assembly. The legitimacy and relevance of the Assembly depends above all on its ability to translate its decisions and commitments into practical actions.

Let us all demonstrate that the Strategy has brought us closer together in order to counter that scourge. It is only with strong resolve that we can achieve a safer world for all of us.

I now give the floor to the Secretary-General.

The Secretary-General: Terrorism is heinous and insidious. It seeks to break spirits, to tear apart communities, to suffocate hope.

Terrorism is deeply personal. It kills our sons, daughters and mothers; our fathers, sisters and brothers. But we cannot let it destroy our families, including our United Nations family — staff members who are targeted as they feed the poor, protect the weak and empower the downtrodden.

On 18 December in Algiers, I saw with my own eyes the devastation left by the attack on our offices. I saw the horror in the eyes of survivors and the families of those killed, and I witnessed the bravery of those who went to the site immediately after the bombing and dug in the rubble with their bare hands, hoping to save their colleagues and friends.

I was overwhelmed and overcome by emotion. I will never forget the tears I shed with everyone that day. I brought back with me many searing impressions and memories. The flag that had flown outside our Algiers offices, now tattered and torn from the blast, is on display at our Geneva headquarters; and of course, the flag from the Canal Hotel in Baghdad hangs in the visitors' lobby here in New York. Both serve as emblems of our determination to reinvigorate our efforts to counter the scourge of terrorism.

Two years ago, the General Assembly took a courageous step and boldly, with unanimous voice, said "no more". One hundred and ninety-two Member States said that we can, we must and we will do more to protect our citizens, and do it together. Transcending geographic, political, cultural and religious divides, Member States drafted and adopted the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. It is that historic document whose implementation we review today.

Since the Strategy's adoption, the commitment of the Member States has not wavered. Instead, it has strengthened and deepened. We have made much progress.

Two years ago, the effort to improve United Nations system coordination and coherence on counter-terrorism was still new. Today, United Nations entities are working together on a regular basis. Moreover, United Nations actors beyond those with explicit counter-terrorism-related mandates have become acutely conscious of the contributions that their efforts can and must bring to the fight.

We have come a long way, but we cannot stop now. We must intensify our efforts to implement the Strategy across the board. That is not a choice; it is a fundamental duty. We must be strategic, proactive and realistic. We must be guided by and comply with our obligations under international law, in particular human rights law, refugee law and international humanitarian law. By including those imperatives in the Strategy, Member States have created a comprehensive and forward-looking document.

As representatives know, the Strategy embodies a broad call to action. International, national, regional, subregional and civil society actors all have roles to play, but Member States must be the key drivers. National-level action is critical. States have proven extremely effective at marshalling the expertise and efforts needed to prevent and respond to terrorism. At the same time, national efforts alone are not sufficient. Not all States have the same capacities, and of course terrorism is a global, cross-border challenge. Multilateral cooperation is vital. That is precisely why the United Nations, and more specifically the General Assembly, our universal body, is so deeply involved.

Today, I urge Members to take multilateral counter-terrorism cooperation even further. Our action should be guided by three main principles.

First, we must be innovative in developing our tools. We must not shy away from non-traditional approaches to promoting security. Recent research has found that military force is rarely responsible for bringing an end to terrorist groups; in the majority of cases, other factors, such as police work or the adoption of non-violent political means, have proved more effective. Thus, as the General Assembly has already noted in its draft resolution, multilateral counter-terrorism cooperation should be undertaken in an integrated manner across the four pillars of the Strategy and across the necessary range of actors. We are developing that capacity within the United Nations system through the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force. Our aim is to offer interested Member States the full range of United Nations support in a user-friendly manner. That is the next big step in the United Nations system's efforts on behalf of the Strategy.

Secondly, multilateral counter-terrorism efforts must be undertaken in partnership with regional and subregional organizations and with civil society. The United Nations system and Member States alike can do better in that regard by sharing information about the Strategy at all levels. When we meet in the future to review the implementation of the Strategy, United Nations field staff and national officials from all relevant ministries should join our discussion and share their experiences with us.

Thirdly, counter-terrorism efforts at the international level should leverage our comparative strengths. Much of the capacity and resources for counter-terrorism are found at the bilateral level, but bilateral actions may be insufficient to face the immensity of the needs and circumstances. The collective approach of the United Nations and the legitimacy of the Strategy give multilateral efforts a great advantage that we should maximize.

As we review our progress in the implementation of the Strategy, let us not forget that we are looking back in order to move forward. Where there have been gains, let us build on them. If there are frustrations, let us do more than vent. Let us not only review, but also recommit ourselves to implementation.

And let me be clear. When I say "let us", I do not exclude myself. Counter-terrorism has been among my top priorities as Secretary-General. Just as representatives gather here today to renew their commitment to the Strategy, so do I. Towards that end, I have been striving to institutionalize the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force within the Secretariat. I will also convene next week, here in New York, a symposium on supporting victims of terrorism. I invite all present here to participate and contribute.

It is precisely the victims of terrorism who remind us why we must further develop multilateral counter-terrorism cooperation and capacity. When we see pictures of steel contorted by a terrorist bomb, or worse, the mangled body of a child, it should remind us why political, religious and cultural differences must never drive a wedge between our shared commitment to end terrorism in all its forms, everywhere. As we are constantly and tragically reminded, the urgent need for which the Strategy was created has not faded. The Strategy was crafted not as an end in itself, but as a tool with which to fight an all-too-present plague. Let us together make its implementation an effort that outlasts our days at the United Nations. In that spirit, I wish all here a most productive meeting.

Mr. Delon (France) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The candidate countries Turkey, Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; the countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia; and the Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Armenia align themselves with this statement.

First of all, I should like to thank you, Sir, for convening this meeting and Ambassador Gert Rosenthal, whom you appointed facilitator for the drawing up of the draft resolution on the outcomes of the implementation review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (A/62/L.48), which has brought us together today. Your involvement in the preparation of our work is testament to your dedication, which will surely enable the successful completion of the review of the Strategy.

As stated in the European Counter-Terrorism Strategy adopted by the European Council on 16 December 2005, terrorism poses a threat to all States and to all peoples. By attacking the innocent, it seriously threatens the security and values of democratic societies. Terrorism is criminal and unjustifiable regardless of the circumstances. That is why the European Union is working to bolster the emerging international consensus on the fight against terrorism and to consolidate and supplement existing international standards, beginning with those within the framework of the United Nations.

The adoption of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy on 16 December 2005 was a major success in that respect. All States members of the General Assembly thereby demonstrated their ability to unite and to speak with one voice in the fight against terrorism. That unanimous position of the international community within the multilateral framework of the United Nations is necessary, since both conventional terrorism and nuclear, radiological, biological and chemical terrorism constitute a global threat that disregards borders.

Thus, the European Union once again commends the success that the adoption of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy represents and reiterates its call to maintain the authority of the Strategy two years after its adoption and to reaffirm the four pillars upon which it rests. At the same time, the European Union encourages Member States that have not yet signed and ratified the 13 conventions and protocols of the United Nations that constitute the legal basis of the international counter-terrorism measures to do so.

Furthermore, the European Union calls for full implementation of all resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly on global counter-terrorism. The European Union also calls for a prompt conclusion to the negotiations of the comprehensive convention on international terrorism so as to complete the international counter-terrorism system.

The consensus on fighting terrorism must in no way undermine the obligations of States pursuant to their respective commitments to the protection of human rights, refugee law and international humanitarian law. Defending and protecting human rights for all and the primacy of the rule of law are essential to every aspect of the Strategy. In that respect, the Strategy recalls that "effective counter-terrorism measures and the protection of human rights are not conflicting goals, but complementary and mutually reinforcing" (*res. 60/288, annex, part IV*).

The review of the implementation of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy that has brought us together today goes beyond examining a simple declaration. By taking the form of a draft resolution accompanied by an action plan, the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy strives to be operational and able to guide the actions of every actor in the international community. As an operational instrument, the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy naturally requires an implementation review. That review is all the more critical in that implementing the Strategy involves, for each of its four pillars, a variety of stakeholders, States, civil society, regional organizations, the United Nations and a range of tools. In that context, the European Union emphasizes the importance of stepping up counter-terrorism efforts on the basis of an integrated and comprehensive approach involving all stakeholders, including civil society, the private sector and regional organizations.

At the State level, we note that much effort has been made, particularly as a result of technical assistance and international cooperation, which help to strengthen counter-terrorism measures. Channels of cooperation have been endorsed, in particular by the Counter-terrorism Committee established pursuant to

resolution 1373 (2001), its Executive Directorate and the technical assistance programmes of the Terrorism Prevention Branch of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. To illustrate that aspect, some States members of the European Union will speak today on their national initiatives and technical assistance projects with third States, which were set up in response to the adoption of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

At the regional level, several organizations have also taken initiatives to increase their capacity to combat terrorism in accordance with the United Nations Strategy. In that regard, the European Union has redoubled its efforts to implement fully the four pillars of the Global Strategy. The European Union's Counterterrorism Coordinator, Mr. Gilles de Kerchove, who will speak shortly to give a detailed description of the series of initiatives to eliminate the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism, to prevent and fight terrorism, to enhance counter-terrorism capacity and to respect human rights.

The European Union welcomes the actions taken by the United Nations. As demonstrated by the Secretary-General's report of July 2008, entitled "United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy: activities of the United Nations system in implementing the Strategy" (A/62/898), the United Nations has implemented several measures to allow for better coordination among its counter-terrorism bodies, with the result that they now function more efficiently.

Efforts should still be made so that the Assembly is kept better informed of that coordination work, including through increased interaction with the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force that oversees them. For example, the Task Force could deliver biannual progress reports at the General Assembly. In addition, closer contact could be established between the Task Force and the relevant Security Council committees — the Counter-Terrorism Committee and the Committees established pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999) and 1540 (2004).

With regard to those challenges, we commend the work accomplished by the Task Force and the efforts referred to by the Secretary-General in his report on the activities of the United Nations system in implementing the Strategy to lend it the necessary administrative support. We are confident that it is possible to meet that goal and that the Task Force can receive the institutional status that it deserves in being accorded sufficient budgetary and staff resources to fulfil its mandate. In that regard, the European Union recognizes the efforts made by the Secretary-General to achieve that within the limits of the existing resources, as the Strategy originally stipulated.

Finally, in order to assess future efforts, the European Union supports the principle of re-examining implementation of the Strategy in the future and thus hopes that a review deadline will be set in the draft resolution that we shall adopt.

Please be assured that the European Union, as it has done in preparing for this meeting, seeks to participate constructively in discussions and to facilitate the adoption of a text that will uphold the authority of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

Mr. De Kerchove will now make a presentation on the efforts undertaken by the European Union in that regard.

Mr. De Kerchove (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank you, Mr. President, and the French presidency of the Council of Ministers of the European Union (EU) for giving me the opportunity to briefly present the contributions of the EU as a whole to the implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, which was adopted by the Assembly in 2006. Obviously, there is not enough time to go into the details of the measures undertaken and policies pursued since 2006. I have made available to the Assembly a chart that highlights the various pillars of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and the specific measures undertaken by the EU. That document is available by the door to the Hall. After I briefly reiterate the principles on which the actions of the EU are based, I will illustrate them using the most recent and the most emblematic measures.

First, I will address the principles. Three principles guide the efforts of the EU. The first is to consider terrorism as a heinous crime that must be prevented, prosecuted and punished in accordance with the common rules and procedures of criminal law. The approach is therefore deliberately legal and judiciary. The EU is contributing, as I will demonstrate, to providing its member States with an array of appropriate legal tools in that area.

The second principle has to do with the EU preference for a multilateral approach, through support not only for the actions of the United Nations, the General Assembly and the Security Council in particular, but also for the actions of regional organizations such as the African Union or the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

The third principle is the central commitment of the EU to scrupulous respect for basic human rights and individual freedoms. The EU Counter-Terrorism Strategy, adopted by the European Council in December 2005, is articulated, as is the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, around four pillars: preventing radicalization; prosecuting the perpetrators of attacks; protecting borders and critical infrastructure; and responding to the aftermath of a major attack.

Allow me to quickly review those four pillars. First, the pillar on which we are increasingly working is the prevention of radicalization and recruitment. The EU has been working since 2004 to strike a new balance in its approach. Initially, I admit, our approach essentially had to do with repressive efforts. In trying to prevent radicalization and the move towards violence by young people living in Europe or outside of it, we must identify those factors that facilitate the process of radicalization, the factors that motivate the use of violence and structural factors that may fuel that complex process.

The EU has mobilized its academic community and funded various studies in that area. I admit that the matter is sensitive on many levels. It is, first of all, crucial to avoid associating terrorism with any specific religion. In addition, a number of policies, such as promoting intercultural or interfaith dialogue, are valuable in and of themselves, and would be greatly diminished if they were undertaken only because they help to prevent terrorism. Lastly, a number of policies remain within the competences of the member States. I refer in particular to access to quality jobs, education, housing and, in general, integration. That is why the EU seeks to identify the best practices in those areas and to recommend their adoption to its member States.

Among the latest measures adopted by the EU in terms of prevention, allow me to highlight a few. I am thinking in particular of the publication under way of a manual listing best practices to avoid radicalization in prisons. The European Police Office, the EU agency on police cooperation, has created a secure portal that provides analysis by intelligence and police services of Internet sites that incite crime and terrorism and contribute to radicalizing youth, in addition to a platform that brings together the cybercrimes detected by member States. I am also thinking here of the efforts to develop community police forces and local reintegration processes in order — and I think this is important — to develop a counter-discourse to discourage the co-opting of religion for ideological reasons. I am also thinking about the encouragement of intercultural dialogue. As representatives may know, the EU has decided to designate 2008 the year of intercultural dialogue, particularly through support for very specific projects in the field of education, in particular the education of the very young, and active support for the Alliance of Civilizations.

The second pillar is prosecution, which falls within the context of all European Union policies to streamline the European penal system. That involves first the application of the principle of mutual recognition, which allows for the rapid execution throughout the EU of pre-sentencing judicial decisions — the freezing of assets, arrest warrants and warrants to obtain evidence — and of final judicial decisions, such as asset confiscation and arrest warrants leading to imprisonment. Efforts are also being undertaken to harmonize the respective criminal codes of member States. In that connection, the Council of European Ministers adopted major legislation this year to expand the European definition of terrorism in order to cover incitement to commit terrorist acts — in particular through the use of the Internet — recruitment and training. A series of measures have also been taken to improve the gathering and sharing of information among all domestic security personnel — intelligence agencies, police, customs and judicial entities. I am thinking in particular here of police information, judicial information and information held by the private sector, which can also be extremely important to prosecution and investigation. Lastly, the European Community and Union have adopted all the necessary legislation for the implementation of the nine special recommendations of the Financial Action Task Force on Money Laundering regarding the funding of terrorism. The challenge today is to implement those measures concretely and to improve cooperation between the intelligence community and financial institutions.

Moving quickly to the third pillar, before reaching my conclusion, 22 of 27 member States and two non-member States of the EU have decided to engage in the free circulation of persons and to remove controls at their shared borders. In the process of free circulation offered to our citizens, certain compensatory measures must be taken to enhance the security of travel documents, such as the use of biometric technology, and to establish large databases, such as the Visa Information System and the Schengen Information System. Visa policies must be harmonized, as must external border policies. A European external border agency, Frontex, was established to that end. Further measures which I will not discuss here are also under consideration. The EU has also adopted this year a plan of action to enhance the security of explosives and of critical transportation and energy infrastructure. Next year we hope to adopt a major plan to reduce the risk of nuclear, radiological, biological and chemical attacks.

Lastly, with regard to the fourth pillar, through a series of measures in the area of civilian protection, the European Union is working to strengthen the capacity of member States to respond to the effects of a major terrorist attack.

That is a very brief overview of some examples of recent measures by the European Union to implement the Global Strategy.

My intervention would not be complete if I failed to mention the efforts of the European Community and Union to assist other countries to resolve their conflicts, restore and maintain peace, stabilize democracy and the rule of law, and develop their economies. In that regard, I would like in particular to refer to the European Union's police and rule of law missions in Afghanistan, Iraq, the Palestinian territories and Guinea-Bissau. I should also like to refer to a series of development assistance measures, as well as to the Union's financing of programmes in more than 70 countries to combat terrorism and promote general political dialogue.

As the President has pointed out, the draft resolution that the General Assembly will adopt shortly underscores the specific role that regional organizations are called upon to play in the implementation of the Global Strategy. I apologize for taking so much time, but I do hope that what I have said illustrates for Member States the determination of the European Union to continue to contribute actively in that regard.

Mr. Amil (Pakistan): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the group of States members of the Organization of the Islamic Conference on the first biennial review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

At the outset, the Group would like to express its appreciation for the efforts of Ambassador Gert Rosenthal of Guatemala, facilitator of the Counter-Terrorism Strategy review consultations, aimed at reaching a consensus draft resolution on the review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

The Group reaffirms its strong condemnation of all acts and practices of terrorism and remains convinced that terrorism — irrespective of its motivation, objectives, forms and manifestations and committed by whomever, wherever and for whatever purposes — can never be justified.

The Group also reaffirms that terrorism cannot and should not be associated with any religion, nationality, civilization or ethnic group, and stresses the need to continue the ongoing efforts to promote a culture of peace, justice and human development; ethnic, national and religious tolerance; respect for all religions, religious values, beliefs and cultures; and prevent the defamation of religions. The Group is of the view that terrorism is itself a violation of human rights.

The Group supports a comprehensive strategy to combat terrorism that must address the root causes of terrorism, including the unlawful use of force, aggression, foreign occupation, festering international disputes, the denial of the right of peoples living under foreign occupation to self-determination, political and economic injustices, and political marginalization and alienation.

The Group reiterates the need to make a distinction between terrorism and the exercise of the legitimate right of peoples to resist foreign occupation, and would like to stress that that distinction is duly observed in international law, international humanitarian law, Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations and General Assembly resolution 46/51, which also endorse that position.

The Group reaffirms that the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy constitutes an

ongoing effort and is a living document that should be updated and examined regularly. The Group also reaffirms that the Counter-Terrorism Strategy should be implemented in all its aspects. The Group stresses that the implementation of the Strategy lies first and foremost in the hands of Member States.

The Group recalls that, to ensure State ownership of the Strategy, the participation of all Member States in the decision-making process for the implementation of the Strategy should be ensured. Periodic written reports and regular briefings by the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force on its coordination and coherence activities and an intergovernmental oversight mechanism developed through consensus on the part of all Member States will facilitate the achievement of that objective. The Group believes that the activities of the Task Force should be untied from its sources of funding. Those activities should be demand-driven instead of being donor-driven.

The Group stresses that the establishment of appropriate structures and the organization of events and activities related to the Strategy should be undertaken in a way that promotes consensus, respects given mandates, avoids politicization and addresses all aspects of the Counter-Terrorism Strategy on an equal footing.

The Group expresses its deep sympathy for the victims of all acts of terrorism, whether perpetrated by State or non-State actors, and for the victims of the implementation of counter-terrorism measures who suffer due to disregard for human rights and international humanitarian law.

The Group takes note of the Secretary-General's recent invitation to Member States to participate in the symposium on victims of terrorism. The Group believes that it would have been better if the symposium on victims of terrorism had been organized as a result of transparent and all-inclusive multilateral intergovernmental consultation.

The Group would like to stress the central role of the General Assembly in combating terrorism, as it is the only body at the level of the United Nations that enjoys universal membership.

The Group reiterates its support for the high-level conference to find solutions to the perennial issues related to international efforts to counter terrorism, and also underscores the need to develop a code of conduct for international efforts to combat terrorism.

The Group reaffirms its support for the proposal of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, to establish an international centre under the aegis of the United Nations to combat international terrorism.

Mr. Al-Murad (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): On behalf of the Arab Group, we would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this important meeting on the first review of the implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, which was adopted in September 2006. We would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his report (A/62/898) on this issue, which was prepared pursuant to resolution 60/288. We would also like to express our gratitude to the facilitator, Ambassador Gert Rosenthal of Guatemala, for his efforts in that regard.

The Arab Group attaches great importance to the efforts exerted to combat terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, as Arab States continue to be among the countries of the world that most suffer from terrorism. Hundreds of thousands of innocent citizens in the Arab world have lost their lives to terrorism.

The League of Arab States was a pioneer in putting forward an Arab strategy to combat terrorism, which the Council of Arab Foreign Ministers adopted in 1997. In 1998, the League also put forward a comprehensive Arab agreement to combat terrorism. That legal framework is now an important regional mechanism that complements the efforts made by the General Assembly in accordance with Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter.

The Arab States have already implemented many of the measures set out in the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, and a number of others are still in the implementation process. Furthermore, the Arab Group attaches great importance to all the measures set out in the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, particularly those aimed at addressing the root causes of terrorism and the conditions and factors leading to its proliferation.

In that regard, the Arab Group reaffirms its consistent position that terrorism cannot be linked to any religion, nationality, civilization or ethnic group and emphasizes that everyone must abide by that principle, in accordance with the provisions of the

Strategy. Therefore, the Arab Group calls for greater dialogue, tolerance and understanding among civilizations, cultures, peoples and religions and for the criminalization of disrespect for and defamation of religions and the desecration of their symbols, since such acts serve to incite hate, which could lead to terrorism. In that context, the Arab Group commends the World Conference on Dialogue, held in Madrid, from 16 to 18 July 2008 under the auspices of His Majesty, the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud of Saudi Arabia, and His Majesty King Juan Carlos of Spain.

The Arab Group refers to the fact that the Strategy contains no definitions of terrorism or State terrorism owing to the lack of an international agreement on such definitions, which could hamper international counter-terrorism efforts. In that connection, the Arab Group reaffirms the need to conclude the negotiations on a United Nations draft comprehensive convention against international terrorism that will include specific definitions of international terrorism and State terrorism and will distinguish between terrorism and the legitimate right of peoples to resist occupation and aggression, while taking into account that the killing of innocent civilians is not sanctioned by divine laws or by international or regional conventions.

The Arab Group believes it is crucial to ensure the success of the Strategy's review process, despite the apparent lack of a specific methodology in the preparations for the important meetings to be held in that regard. Thus we would like to make the following observations to help ensure a successful review process.

First, the Arab Group affirms the importance of comprehensive and non-selective follow-up to the implementation of the Strategy's provisions, as well as the central role that the General Assembly can play, as the most representative principal organ of the United Nations, in considering the issue of combating terrorism in all its aspects.

Secondly, the Arab Group reaffirms the need to fully comply with all United Nations counter-terrorism resolutions, using every available means, and to confront terrorism in all its forms and manifestations to ensure the maintenance of international peace and security.

Thirdly, the Arab Group welcomes the provisions of the Assembly's draft resolution on the coordination of the counter-terrorism activities of Member States with those of the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force, within their own mandates. That would enable Member States to play a greater role in directing policies and implementing the Strategy, as they bear the primary responsibility in that area, and to monitor the activities of the Task Force in a responsible and transparent manner.

Fourthly, we believe that establishing the Task Force within the Secretariat and equipping it with the necessary resources provide a good basis for an organized, constructive and integrated contribution to the efforts of Member States to attain the objectives of the Strategy.

Fifthly, the Arab Group would also like to reaffirm its support for the proposal, presented by His Majesty King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud of Saudi Arabia, that an international counter-terrorism centre be established under United Nations auspices.

Mr. Sow (Guinea) (*spoke in French*): It is a great honour and an immense pleasure to address the General Assembly on behalf of the Group of African States on the happy occasion of the consideration of draft resolution A/62/L.48 on the implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. The African Group expresses its appreciation to you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting and congratulates the Secretary-General on his comprehensive report on the activities of the United Nations system in implementing the Strategy (A/62/898). We should also like to thank the facilitator, Ambassador Gert Rosenthal of Guatemala, for his excellent preparatory work.

In the light of the commendable activities undertaken on the continent, in particular by the African Union, the African Group would like to recall the important role that it played in the General Assembly's adoption, on 8 September 2006, of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. The adoption of that instrument by all State Members of the Organization marked an important step in the launching of a coordinated, coherent and comprehensive fight against terrorism at the national, regional and global levels.

The African Group wishes to add that international terrorism represents an extremely grave

threat to the peace, security, stability and development of the continent and requires priority attention and a resolute response on the part of our peoples and Governments. It was in that context that African leaders committed themselves, together with the international community, to achieving the following outcomes: the adoption of the Dakar Declaration against Terrorism in 2001; the adoption, in Algiers on 14 July 1999, of the Organization of African Unity Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism; the adoption, in 2002, of the Algiers Plan of Action on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism in Africa; the creation of the African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism, which became operational on 13 October 2004; and the adoption that same year of the Protocol to the Algiers Convention. The Intergovernmental Action Group against Money-Laundering was established in West Africa to the same end.

While Member States bear the primary responsibility for implementing the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, we must also emphasize that, if it is to be fully successful, the Strategy must benefit from the mobilization of a regional and global partnership among all stakeholders and at all levels, including civil society and the private sector. Such a partnership should bring together in a coordinated manner Member States, United Nations entities, regional and subregional organizations and representatives of civil society.

The African Group welcomes in that regard the active, coordinated and coherent contribution of the United Nations system — particularly through its Departments, specialized agencies, funds and programmes, as well as the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force — to implementing the Strategy. The Group also welcomes the organization by the Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate, in cooperation with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the task forces supporting the other committees of the Security Council involved, of a series of workshops intended to draw the attention of Member States of West, Central and southern Africa to the provisions of Security Council resolution 1373 (2001).

The Group appreciates the convening from 2 to 4 April in Algiers by the African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism, in cooperation with the Government of Spain, of a seminar on counter-terrorism in North Africa. It also welcomes the seminar on counter-terrorism in Central Africa held in Brazzaville from 26 to 28 May. Such seminars show the determination of the international community, and especially of the leaders of Africa, to implement the Strategy, and deserve our attention.

The Group welcomes the entry into force in July 2007 of the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism, an important legal instrument in the service of the international community's solidarity struggle. We also strongly call for the adoption of a global counter-terrorism convention and urge Member States to accelerate the negotiation process to that end.

Political quarrels and differences should not hinder our commitment to combating that contemporary international scourge at its source. This is an opportunity for the Task Force to express its sympathy to the countries and innocent victims of terrorism in Africa and throughout the world, and to reiterate its condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations.

Terrorism has become increasingly fearsome as it has adapted to globalization and become increasingly sophisticated. It has changed its methods and established increasingly closer links with other types of crime, such as drug trafficking, money-laundering and illicit trafficking in weapons, that are equally condemnable and dangerous to the stability of States. The success of any action to combat the scourge will require solidarity between all members of the international community, and will be measured in the number of lives saved and of terrorist acts thwarted. Such action requires tolerance, dialogue between civilizations and the acceptance of our differences in a community of shared interests. It will also require the settlement of conflicts that are tearing so many countries apart and solutions to development problems.

The African Group hopes that the biennial review of the Strategy will consolidate international cooperation in the implementation of essential measures contained in the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, such as the elimination of conditions conducive to the dissemination of terrorism, particularly poverty, social exclusion and marginalization; the prevention and suppression of terrorism; increasing the capacities of States and the role of the United Nations; and respect for the human

rights of all and for the rule of law as the critical foundation of counter-terrorism activity.

In that respect, the African Group, reiterating the requests of the African Union Peace and Security Council, appeals to the international community, including the United Nations, to provide the technical and financial assistance necessary to allow African States to strengthen their capacity to counter terrorism. It calls on the United Nations system and specialized agencies to provide the necessary support to allow the Commission of the African Union and its Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism, based in Algiers, to implement the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

In conclusion, the African Group undertakes to make a positive contribution to the fullest success of our work.

Mr. Mohsen (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I wish to thank the Secretary-General for his report on the Organization's efforts in implementing the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (A/62/898), and the facilitator for his efforts to facilitate the conclusion of the informal consultations on the draft resolution on reviewing the implementation of the Strategy. The draft resolution reaffirms the Strategy's importance and the need to update and develop the means to implement it in order to address changes and challenges the international community faces in its quest to combat terrorism. The draft also highlights the determination of Member States to take concrete action and measures at all levels to ensure the elimination of terrorism internationally, regionally and nationally.

The review of the Strategy requires an assessment of the progress achieved in its implementation and an evaluation of the obstacles impeding the achievement of its objectives. It requires the Member States, as the actors primarily responsible for implementing the Strategy, to make greater efforts, in cooperation and coordination among themselves, in order to succeed in their confrontation of that imminent danger, which threatens the stability of peoples and hinders their development and prosperity.

From that perspective, Egypt believes that the main factor for the success of the Strategy is the support of the United Nations Member States for its elements, and that we are all able to agree on that point. Nevertheless, none of the hoped-for results has been achieved within the past two years, which confirms the existence of shortcomings that must be corrected through the necessary action of the General Assembly.

Perhaps the most significant deficiency is the restriction of the membership of the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force to certain mechanisms and bodies, some belonging to the Secretariat and others outside it, such as INTERPOL, for instance. Egypt stresses that the key factor for the success of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and United Nations efforts in that area must be a Task Force that includes representatives of the States members of the General Assembly, with the assistance of the Secretariat.

While recognizing the importance of the Secretariat's efforts, the delegation of Egypt reaffirms that the United Nations activities, including those of the Task Force, complement the efforts of Member States, which are the primary and ultimate point of reference in that regard. Furthermore, it is important that the Task Force commit itself to the various aspects of the Strategy, since its main role is to ensure the coordination and coherence of efforts of the bodies operating within the United Nations system to combat terrorism.

Henceforth the Task Force should focus on improving the performance of the United Nations by avoiding duplication in the implementation of mandates and ensuring that the focus of its cooperation with the Security Council's committees be confined to the security aspects, and not on any other matter falling within the competence of the General Assembly. There is no doubt that this issue will not be resolved unless States participate in steering and directing the work of the Task Force.

In that context and in light of the importance of the commitment of the Task Force to the elements of the Strategy, the delegation of Egypt stresses that it is unnecessary to expand the establishment of working groups on the relevant issues within the Task Force or to use terms that Member States have rejected ever since the commencement of negotiations on the Strategy, such as "radicalism and extremism". Those working groups should focus on their tasks, as entrusted by the United Nations Member States, on the four pillars of the Strategy, which must be implemented in parallel.

Mr. Hannesson (Iceland), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Hence, it is important to point out that the Task Force should avoid selectivity in implementing the pillars of the Strategy. In that regard, we question the reason behind the focus on certain topics and not on others, such as radicalization and the victims of terrorism. We also question the usefulness of the preparation, by the working group on preventing and resolving conflicts, of guidelines on combating terrorism to be used by peacekeepers and representatives of the Secretary-General in the settlement of disputes or on ending situations of foreign occupation and other conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism. We question in particular the perception that addressing such conditions requires the genuine political will of Member States and the building of the capacity of countries to confront them and not agreed-upon guidelines, especially when those principles have been previously approved by the international community in the United Nations Charter.

Although the delegation of Egypt supports providing the Task Force with the necessary financial resources from the budget of the Organization, we would also like to emphasize that that issue is directly linked to the participation of Member States in the efforts to ensure compliance with the mandate to implement the Strategy through their involvement in those activities. That will allow the Task Force to benefit from the experiences of Member States in its efforts to combat terrorism.

In that regard, I should like briefly to refer to the organization of seminars and workshops on the implementation of the Strategy. The delegation of Egypt hopes that such seminars will take place in a more transparent manner that avoids selectivity and politicization. In that context, I should like to underscore that, in connection with the symposium on the victims of terrorism to be held at the United Nations, and despite Egypt's total support and sympathy for victims, holding a symposium for the victims of terrorism while ignoring other victims such as those of foreign occupation, humanitarian disasters, crises and violations of international humanitarian law raises several questions. In addition, in the absence of a uniform agreed legal definition of terrorism, focusing on victims of terrorism serves to politicize the issue instead of dealing with its humanitarian aspects and ensuring that those victims are also cared for. I therefore reiterate the need to hold seminars only after fully consulting with Member States, instead of in isolation, and with financing from the Organization's budget, rather than external financing provided by States with a view to holding seminars to address specific issues.

With regard to cooperation between the United Nations, regional organizations and civil society to implement the Strategy, the delegation of Egypt appreciates such cooperation and attaches importance to strengthening it.

In conclusion, I should like to emphasize that the draft resolution should include a mechanism for a periodic review of the Strategy similar to the one provided for in resolution 60/288, which was adopted in 2006. The General Assembly should undertake periodic follow-ups of the Strategy in order to evaluate the success in its implementation.

Finally, I would like to emphasize that, despite the observations I have made on the draft resolution, the adoption of a consensus draft resolution on the review of the implementation of the Strategy would significantly highlight the unity of the international community in combating terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, including State terrorism. That will contribute both to the success of the Strategy and to international efforts to prevent all forms of terrorism. We have therefore agreed to join the consensus on the draft resolution. We also hope that the Secretariat will adopt a positive attitude in responding to the demands of Member States.

Mr. Alrashidi (Saudi Arabia) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank the President for the statement he made regarding the first review of the Strategy. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his report (A/62/898) and for his efforts in this regard.

My delegation associates itself with the statements delivered on behalf of the member countries of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, as well as with the one on behalf of the members of the League of Arab States.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has been the target and victim of terrorist attacks. My country has long worked to combat that dangerous scourge and continues to take the necessary steps to counter it. We have achieved concrete results on several levels.

At the local level, the competent authorities in the area of counter-terrorism have put in place several

measures to put an end to terrorism. They have been proactive in preventing criminal acts and in ensuring that their strategy to fight them was successful. The goal of that strategy was to dry up sources of financing for terrorism and to combat terrorists at the levels of intelligence and security. The counter-terrorism authorities of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia have made combating terrorism a priority, as well as a subject of study in various university and college curriculums throughout the Kingdom.

I must also not fail to refer to successful programmes that provide counselling and rehabilitation services to young people who have been misguided by terrorist ideas. Those programmes have been very successful in combating this dangerous scourge and provide an example from which other countries can benefit.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has repeatedly reaffirmed at numerous regional and international forums its desire to join international counter-terrorism efforts and to contribute to collective international measures to address the root causes of terrorism. In line with our ongoing and consistent policies against international terrorism and those who commit it, my country was among the first States to accede to the majority of international counter-terrorism conventions. Those include the counter-terrorism conventions and agreements of the Gulf Cooperation Council, that of the League of Arab States, which was adopted in 1989, and of the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

At the international level, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has also become a party to United Nations conventions on terrorism. In February 2005, we hosted an international conference on counter-terrorism at our capital, Riyadh. Some 60 States and many international and regional organizations participated in the conference, which adopted several recommendations. Those included a prominent proposal calling on King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud to establish an international counter-terrorism centre under the aegis of the United Nations. That proposal enjoyed broad support from the international community and was subsequently adopted by a number of international bodies, including summits of the League of Arab States, the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the Non-Aligned Movement, as well as the Arab-Latin Summit.

In that context, we hope that this meeting of the General Assembly will adopt the proposal made by the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, to establish an international counter-terrorism centre under the auspices of the United Nations in order to link national and regional centres through a common database. That would make it possible to quickly track and counter the actions of terrorists and their organizations. The centre would also be mandated to support the voluntary exchange and transfer of needed counter-terrorism technologies and training programmes, as well as of expertise and coordination related to the drafting of legislation.

In this context the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia reaffirms its commitment to supporting and helping the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, because terrorism is no longer a phenomenon linked to a specific religion, people or ethnic group. It has become an international phenomenon and thus poses a danger to everyone. Hence there is a need for international efforts to contain it and counter it effectively and thoroughly, with a sense of responsibility, seriousness and fairness, through international actions agreed upon within the framework of the United Nations. Thus, we can put an end to terrorism, save innocent lives and safeguard the sovereignty and stability of States and the security, safety and prosperity of all peoples.

Mr. İlkin (Turkey): Turkey aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of France on behalf of the European Union. I shall therefore limit myself to the following points.

First of all, it is a great pleasure for me to address the General Assembly on this very important issue. The informal meeting of the General Assembly held on 4 December 2007 — one of whose sessions I had the honour to chair — was a useful and informative midterm stock-taking exercise on the progress made in the implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy by Member States and the United Nations. In that regard, we look forward to hearing more today about the measures taken within the framework of the Strategy and about how we can further improve and develop the implementation of the Strategy.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the President of the General Assembly and the Secretary-General for their opening remarks. In

addition, I wish to thank the facilitator, Ambassador Gert Rosenthal of Guatemala, for his unrelenting efforts to help achieve an agreement on the outcome document for the present session.

Two years ago, the General Assembly took a historic step by adopting the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, and we duly recognize that landmark development. However, we also recognize the fact that the overall success of the Strategy will be judged in terms of concrete results. For that reason, we sincerely call upon all members of the international community to continue to contribute to the full and effective implementation of the Strategy.

Turkey, for its part, is committed to making every effort in that direction. For instance, in parallel to our national endeavours, we served as a sponsor of the International Process on Global Counter-Terrorism Cooperation, whose focus was to assess the overall contributions of the United Nations to the fight against terrorism and to provide support for the implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

As members may be aware, several workshops were organized within the context of the International Process, and their results have already been shared with representatives. Nevertheless, I would like very briefly to highlight one of the issues that was discussed in depth during the workshop held in Antalya, Turkey, and reflected in the final document of the Process, namely, international legal cooperation on terrorism.

In that regard, we are of the view that the idea put forward in the final document concerning the need to promote greater awareness of the problems impeding the implementation of the principle "extradite or prosecute" merits greater consideration. Current practice in that area is by no means in line with the letter or the spirit of the Strategy. We hope that our discussions today will help us to identify ways and means to overcome the obstacles in the application of that important principle.

We can begin to speak about the success of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy only if it is implemented by all stakeholders, including Member States, the United Nations and other relevant international, regional and subregional organizations, and if it is implemented in an integrated manner and in all its aspects.

The recent report of the Secretary-General (A/62/898) presents highlights of the efforts within the United Nations system in that direction. His continued interest in and guidance aimed at the effective implementation of the Strategy deserve the utmost praise. This also applies to all his collaborators dealing directly or indirectly with the issue of terrorism. However, I cannot say the same for the Department of Public Information (DPI).

Just two months ago, a photographic exhibition took place in this building that, unfortunately, included pictures of the members of a terrorist organization targeting Turkey. That terrorist organization has been declared as such by many countries and institutions, including the European Union. I should also underline that its terrorist nature is recognized by the Secretariat. Therefore, one cannot help but ask why and how those photos came to be displayed under the roof of the United Nations, which holds a central place in our counter-terrorism efforts. We raised this matter with the Department. Unfortunately, it declined to take any action on the issue, citing a routine disclaimer posted at the exhibition, which denies endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations of the contents of any exhibition. However, were the disclaimer sufficient, there would be no need to regulate the contents of the exhibitions displayed by DPI at United Nations Headquarters, as is always done.

We believe that, on that particular occasion, the DPI not only failed to carry out its responsibility to oversee the aims, purposes and principles of the United Nations, which include the fight against terrorism; ultimately — although, I am sure, unintentionally — it also provided a terrorist organization with a unique opportunity to reach out to the United Nations community in this building.

I am aware that our meeting today is aimed first and foremost at sharing best practices on the implementation of the Strategy. Nevertheless, lessons can also be drawn from other practices such as the one in question. That is precisely why I have brought up that unfortunate incident and wanted to share our views on it with the Assembly. That having been said, it is my sincere hope and expectation that our discussions today will strengthen our collective resolve and our efforts to eradicate the scourge of terrorism once and for all.

Mr. Benmehidi (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): I should like at the outset to welcome the Secretary-

General's presence this morning as we begin our work, which attests to his interest in the subject before us. I should also like to thank President Kerim for having convened this meeting on the first review of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. In addition, I should like to take this opportunity to thank Ambassador Gert Rosenthal of Guatemala for his efforts and his patience throughout the negotiations process on draft resolution A/62/L.48.

My delegation subscribes to the statements made by the representative of Pakistan on behalf of the Organization of the Islamic Conference and by the representative of Guinea on behalf of the Group of African States.

The United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy that we are reviewing today is the outcome of a long-term effort of the General Assembly, undertaken since the statement delivered by the Secretary-General in Madrid in March 2005. The need for the Strategy was also reiterated by our heads of State and Government at the 2005 World Summit. The international community in fact needed, given the lack of a general convention on terrorism, to agree on a consensus-based road map to address terrorism together and give robust impetus to collectively agreed efforts in that respect. The outcome is considerable and nuanced, and must be preserved. That said, the Strategy is not a document that is set in stone. It needs to be periodically revisited in order to be adapted to emerging developments and needs.

Algeria welcomed the adoption of the Strategy and has sought to ensure its national implementation. It took part in the process launched by a number of Member States — which I take this opportunity to commend — in order to consider the best ways to implement the Strategy, help publicize and better understand its provisions, and prepare for its review.

Furthermore, my country, with the relevant working groups of the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force, has undertaken a fruitful process of cooperation and dialogue by sharing its experience in the fight against extremism and against incitement of acts of terrorism, particularly through the use of the Internet. The experience of a number of Algerians who have renounced terrorism has also been examined by the working group of the Task Force tasked with that matter.

In addition, the Government of Algeria encouraged and sponsored the holding in Algiers of the first international workshop on victims of terrorism, held in April 2008. That was an opportunity for a number of officials, experts and stakeholders from civil society to share their experience in terms of assistance and of providing psychological and social care for the victims of terrorism.

Where are we now in terms of the implementation of the Strategy at the international level? The Task Force, which is charged with coordinating the actions of the United Nations system in the fight against counter-terrorism, has set up thematic groups to identify the main outlines of the Strategy. However, a certain ambiguity seems to have marked the implementation of the mandate of the Task Force, in particular because of the selective approach that it has adopted.

The ultimate goal of the review of the Strategy is to highlight the importance of full implementation of its provisions and its potential updating. We have seen that particular attention has been paid to the second and third pillars, to the detriment of the first and fourth. That selective approach has damaged the integrity of the Strategy and does not encourage ownership by Member States, which is key to the success of the Strategy.

Another important element that we would like to highlight, and which draft resolution A/62/L.48 has not been able to address, is the necessary human and material means for the Task Force. Indeed, the Task Force needs more budget resources to be able to forgo voluntary contributions by States and attempts to influence implementation.

Lastly, my delegation would underscore the importance for the Task Force to undertake a process of cooperation with regional counter-terrorism bodies. In that regard, the African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism, which is based in Algiers, is the appropriate counterpart at the African level. The Centre has undertaken, together with European partners in particular, an ambitious initiative aimed at establishing an African database, which would be of great use in its ongoing mission. My delegation encourages any initiative of the Task Force in support of the African Centre, which could provide valuable support to the process of implementing the Strategy.

We could never place too much importance on the commitment of Member States in the process of Strategy implementation, which is at the heart of the draft resolution on the review of the Strategy. As important as the mandate of the Task Force may be, it does not directly obligate Member States, which are free to implement the Strategy or not. That is due to the voluntary nature of the measures provided for in the plan of action, but also, I believe, to the discretion left to Member States in terms of taking specific actions based on its provisions. Follow-up vis-à-vis Member States has indeed not been planned, as it has for the 24 United Nations bodies system that make up the Task Force. By way of comparison, the Security Council has subsidiary bodies that are charged with following up with Member States with regard to their implementation of the various resolutions on counter-terrorism. Indeed, Council resolutions adopted under Chapter VII of the Charter are binding for Member States, but nothing in the Charter prevents the General Assembly from providing follow-up to its decisions in such a sensitive area.

The Strategy continues to be an ongoing effort, and is clearly one that can be perfected. As a result, we now need to begin to prepare for dealing with the institutional issues and others as we look to the next biannual review of the Strategy.

Mr. Suda (Japan): On behalf of my Government, I would like to express our deep gratitude for the leadership provided by President Kerim in the discussion on counter-terrorism. I would also like to express our deep appreciation for the efforts made by the Secretary-General in this area. Our appreciation also goes to Ambassador Rosenthal of Guatemala for his extraordinary contribution in facilitating the informal consultations on the outcome of the plenary meeting.

As we all recognize, combating terrorism is a complex and challenging task for the international community that requires enduring engagement and a comprehensive approach. The United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy adopted by the Assembly two years ago provides us with the fundamental basis for our cooperation. It reaffirms the strong will of all Member States to combat terrorism. It also provides significant guidance for concrete actions to be taken by Member States, the United Nations system and other regional and international bodies.

In the past two years, all stakeholders have made serious efforts to take the necessary measures to implement the Strategy and, as a result, substantial progress has been made. It is an opportune time, therefore, to examine the implementation status of the Strategy and discuss how to further strengthen our counter-terrorism efforts. Japan also welcomes the comprehensive report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations system in implementing the Strategy (A/62/898).

The four pillars identified in the Strategy are all indispensable elements of counter-terrorism. To effectively prevent and combat terrorism, we need to cooperate on all of them. All stakeholders have their respective roles to play, but there is no need to reiterate that Member States have the primary responsibility for taking the necessary actions within their capacity.

Before and after the adoption of the Strategy, Japan has been actively engaged in combating terrorism nationally and internationally. Allow me to outline our recent activities in relation to the implementation of the Strategy.

Japan believes that it is essentially important, in the medium and long term, to address the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism. Those include problems of good governance, the rule of law, education and poverty. Japan is cooperating in numerous countries to build law enforcement capacity, support good governance self-help efforts and assist with the improvement of legal systems and socio-economic infrastructure. We are also promoting several programmes to encourage dialogue among civilizations and religions. Furthermore, we are looking into providing useful support to local areas that are seriously affected by poverty and vulnerable to violent extremism. Assistance in the areas of education and other community needs in such vulnerable areas could help to restore sound communities that are free from the influence of terrorists.

With regard to measures to prevent and combat terrorism, Japan has undertaken a wide range of domestic as well as international measures. For instance, last year we introduced a biometric identification system at our immigration control points, which has proved to be very effective. We are taking numerous steps in response to the Secure and Facilitated International Travel Initiative, which was agreed at the G8 summit in 2004. Needless to say, Japan has been

taking all the necessary steps to fully implement the relevant resolutions of the Security Council, including those relating to freezing assets and deportation.

With regard to international conventions and protocols against terrorism, Japan has already ratified 13 conventions and protocols, including the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism. Furthermore, in order to encourage other countries to become party to those conventions, since 2003 Japan has hosted an annual seminar on the promotion of accession to international counter-terrorism conventions and protocols. That extremely productive seminar includes the participation of countries of the Asia-Pacific region and is held with significant help from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Terrorism Prevention Branch.

Our cooperation in the area of capacity-building ranges from technical assistance to grants of equipment, and from law enforcement to border control and transport security. Besides bilateral cooperation, Japan has been actively engaged in capacity-building with such regional frameworks as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, and has developed numerous concrete projects. In addition, since assuming the presidency of the G8 this year, we have worked to achieve closer coordination between the Counter-Terrorism Action Group (CTAG) and the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate (CTED) by matching the specific needs identified by recipient countries with the available resources of each CTAG member country.

Japan also welcomed the initiative of Switzerland to set up an international process of discussion on global counter-terrorism cooperation. Japan hosted one of those workshops in Tokyo in June of this year. It was a widely shared belief at the workshop that close coordination between United Nations agencies and regional organizations and between traditional and non-traditional actors was essential to the effectiveness of assistance in the area of capacity-building.

We are all in support of the United Nations playing a central role in the international fight against terrorism. While every Member State should continue to contribute to our joint effort with its resources, for its part we expect the United Nations to fully mobilize its organizational strength, variety of resources and expertise. In that respect, I would like to make a few points.

First, the roles and activities of the main United Nations actors in the area of counter-terrorism — such as CTED, the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force and UNODC — should not overlap, but rather complement each other, if they are to make the most of their limited capacities and resources.

Secondly, we should seek out potential areas of cooperation and information sharing with other United Nations bodies and agencies, even if their mandates are not directly related to counter-terrorism, as the comprehensive approach we have adopted under the Strategy needs to address a wide range of issues, such as poverty, education, culture and human rights.

Thirdly, to achieve those ends, the Task Force should play the central role in information sharing and concentrate on its core mandate of coordinating the activities of the different United Nations organs concerned.

In conclusion, I would like to stress again that the primary responsibility for implementing the Strategy rests with Member States. Japan is determined to continue its fight against terrorism and prepared to contribute to further discussion on our unified effort to implement the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy of the United Nations.

Mr. Davide (Philippines): The full text of my statement will be circulated among members. Given the time constraints, I shall abbreviate some portions of it.

The Philippines welcomes this opportunity to speak before the General Assembly on the review of the progress made in the implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. We would like to congratulate and commend Ambassador Gert Rosenthal of Guatemala on his wisdom and dedication, as well as his able staff for facilitating the discussions, that finally produced an outcome document in the form of a draft resolution. Undoubtedly, it will be an important decision for Member States to adopt that draft resolution by consensus, following the model of consensual adoption in connection with the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

The Philippines has consistently maintained that the United Nations must remain at the forefront in combating international terrorism. United Nations agencies must now decisively facilitate international

cooperation and coordination efforts in that regard based on the four-pillar foundation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. Those tasks must create a seamless web of activities aimed at addressing international terrorism and maintaining the rule of law. I need not emphasize that the tasks are formidable and demand courage and political will.

Even as we continue to cooperate and coordinate our efforts in the international arena in that regard, we must also maintain the requisite attention and vigilance within our borders to address the elements and conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism and to hold terrorism in check before it spreads its wickedness, violence, iniquity and immorality and imposes a reign of fear, destruction and death.

In implementing the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, the Philippines has been guided by the four pillars and has implemented each of them using three main tools: first, a comprehensive political, social and economic package for peace and security; secondly, a comprehensive legal package that brings terrorists to justice, plugs the loopholes in the legal system and ensures the protection of human rights; and, thirdly, a broad alliance for technical support, cooperation and preparedness.

The Philippines is convinced that terrorism takes root in conditions of poverty and injustice and the debasing of human dignity, which aggravate marginalization. Poverty spawns terrorism, and the areas where extreme poverty exists serve as fertile grounds for terrorist leaders, financiers and agents to spread their terrorist agenda. Political and socio-economic marginalization rooted in intolerance and misunderstanding have long been recognized as obstacles to development efforts and can lead to extremism and terrorism.

In the experience of the Philippines, economic development, social justice, the protection of human rights and political and judicial reforms are powerful instruments against extremism and terrorism. Aware of that, the Constitution of the Philippines explicitly declares as a policy the promotion of a just and dynamic social order that will ensure the prosperity and independence of the nation and free the people from poverty through policies that provide adequate social services and promote full employment, a rising standard of living and an improved quality of life for all. Also enshrined in the Constitution is a separate article on social justice and human rights that directs the Congress to give the highest priority to the enactment of measures that protect and enhance the rights of all the people to human dignity and reduce social, economic and political inequities by equitably diffusing wealth and political power for the common good. The Philippine Congress has enacted laws to implement those constitutional mandates.

Judicial reforms in the Philippines include measures to address marginalization, such as providing effective and efficient access to justice for the poor. I respectfully submit, as I did many times before when I was Chief Justice of the Philippines, that when each State makes its courts accessible to all, it goes a long way towards addressing the problem of marginalization and stripping all would-be terrorists of the vestiges of moral entitlement and legitimacy.

Our peace negotiations in conflict-ridden areas in the southern Philippines are reinforced by counter-terrorism and conflict-management tools that aim at separating insurgents from terrorists. We are all aware that terrorists thrive on the acts of insurgents, fueling extremism to disastrous levels. By separating them, the Philippines has addressed the political grievances and issues of marginalization without giving into the terrorists.

In another current front, the Philippine Government and civil society have worked together to address those problems through interfaith and intercultural dialogue and understanding. More concretely, to address terrorism head-on, in July of last year the Congress of the Philippines enacted the Human Security Act of 2007. The Act defines and penalizes two crimes: terrorism and conspiracy to commit terrorism. The Act declares it to be the policy of the Philippines to protect life, liberty and property from acts of terrorism, to condemn terrorism as inimical and dangerous to the national security of the country and to the welfare of the people, and to make terrorism a crime against the Filipino people, against humanity and against the law of nations.

The Act also ensures that, even as the State has the right to extirpate terrorism, it shall nevertheless continue to uphold the basic rights and fundamental liberties of the people. It proclaims that "respect for human rights shall be absolute and protected at all times". It calls for a comprehensive approach against

terrorism that includes political, economic, social, legal and even diplomatic means.

The Philippines has also undertaken a continuing programme of bilateral and multilateral cooperation in the field of capacity-building and technical training and preparedness in combating terrorism. It has long-standing commitments on the training on law enforcement, customs clearance and border control with its neighbours in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), as well as Japan and South Korea, in the wider Asia-Pacific region with Australia and New Zealand, and with Canada, the United States and the Governments of the European Union.

The Philippines spearheaded the establishment of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation Counter-Terrorism Task Force, in an effort to secure the Asia-Pacific region from terrorist acts. Closer to home, the Philippines has joined forces with the other ASEAN member States in adopting a convention on terrorism that calls for greater cooperation among ASEAN member States in combating all acts of terror. Those counter-terrorism efforts in the bilateral and multilateral levels aim at securing the Philippines' maritime borders, trade, aviation, remittances and cross-border financial transactions.

The Philippines is honoured to share with the General Assembly information on the measures it has undertaken thus far to implement the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

Mr. Rosenthal (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): Once again, the United Nations is confronting a phenomenon of transnational character: terrorism. We could debate how to define it, but we all understand that no cause, however legitimate, justifies the use of indiscriminate violence against innocent civilians in order to coerce societies and Governments. We reject terrorism and must combat it at the level of every State as well as through regional and international cooperation. That is what we acknowledged two years ago in adopting the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, and that is what we are doing today as we meet to assess the implementation of the steps called for in the Strategy and to give new impetus to the Strategy in the years ahead.

In that regard, given its very nature and universal character, the General Assembly is the appropriate intergovernmental forum to address terrorism. The focus must therefore not be on the individual threat to a single country, but rather on a concerted effort by all countries in the face of the scourge. However, the relevance of the Strategy depends on its implementation, for which Member States are primarily responsible. This review therefore provides us with an opportunity to evaluate our own efforts, learn from them and find additional ways of assisting Members in implementing the Strategy.

My delegation is grateful to the Secretary-General for the report contained in document A/62/898, which helps us to mobilize and to evaluate the worthwhile initiatives undertaken by the United Nations system.

We support the establishment of the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force, which has proven its capacity for coordination and efficiency in guiding the system. We have confidence in its work and congratulate Mr. Robert Orr and his team for their achievements to date despite the budgetary constraints that the Task Force has encountered. We call on the Secretary-General to address those constraints in the next budgetary cycle so that the Task Force can fully carry out its work.

Every State, regardless of the region in which it is situated, be it big or small, strong or weak, is vulnerable to terrorism and its consequences. Given its geographic location, Guatemala is a transit point for the traffic in drugs; which in turn results in associated activities, such as the traffic in small arms and light weapons, the traffic in human beings and transnational organized crime. Against the backdrop of extreme poverty, those phenomena put us at real risk of terrorist acts. In fact, in its 2007 report on crime in Central America, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime warned that we should not underestimate potential links and interrelationships between organized crime, drug trafficking and terrorism.

My Government has mobilized to put an end to those threats, thereby assuming its primary responsibility for ensuring public order and security in a democratic framework. We have also promoted regional cooperation, first at the level of our own Central American subregion and, secondly, at the level of the hemisphere. Through the Office on Drugs and Crime, the United Nations has helped us to develop anti-terrorism legislation in an effort to effectively implement global instruments to combat that

phenomenon. I should now like to refer to some of the main efforts we have undertaken to confront terrorism.

First, our current efforts are focused on incorporating into our national legislation the anti-terrorism provisions contained in international conventions. To date, we have ratified 10 of the 12 global instruments, as well as the Inter-American Convention against Terrorism. Six international instruments are currently pending ratification. I should also mention that, on 5 November 2007, my country's Congress ratified the Protocol to the Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Maritime Navigation and the Protocol for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Fixed Platforms Located on the Continental Shelf. We have also adopted a law to prevent and suppress the financing of terrorism, as well as a new law to regulate the process of extradition. Congressional committees are currently considering a draft law on international terrorism.

Secondly, the Government has established a national security and cybercrime prevention team, with a view to setting up a national cybercrime prevention centre. The team is in the process of being incorporated into the national secretariat for science and technology. To that end, in March 2008, the telecommunications authority, the Foreign Ministry and the Organization of American States held a regional capacity-building workshop at which more than 10 international experts and 40 specialists from the region of the Central American Integration System (SICA) participated. With the support of the Ministry for Public Affairs, Governance and Administration, we have developed a legal profile for cybercrimes with a view to developing a legal framework in that regard.

Thirdly, I am pleased to inform the Assembly that SICA member States are working with Mexico to develop a security strategy for Central America and Mexico to comprehensively orchestrate the joint security efforts of the countries of the region, in line with their own legal arrangements. Among the specific objectives of the strategy will be to integrate the various efforts of the region in the area of security, to facilitate coordination and the exchange of information and experiences, and to identify and manage financial and information resources required by security agencies.

Lastly, no strategy can fail to scrupulously respect human rights and the rule of law. We reiterate our absolute adherence to due process and acknowledge the efforts of the Security Council, especially its work this year to adapt its sanctions to conform with the law, in order to improve the effectiveness and transparency of United Nations sanctions. In that regard, we also welcome the dialogue that has been established between the Security Council, its subsidiary bodies and competent bodies for the promotion and protection of human rights. We urge that those links be strengthened.

In closing, combating organized crime, drug trafficking, the illicit trade in weapons, the fight against terrorism and the strengthening of mechanisms for the exchange of information are priority areas of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and are also closely linked to terrorism and its root causes.

This year marks the sixtieth anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. We believe it timely to recall that event, which has in effect served to guide multilateral efforts in maintaining international peace and security while promoting human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Mr. Chávez (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): On 8 September 2006, 192 States joined together in the General Assembly to support the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and committed themselves to adopting concrete measures to address terrorism in all its aspects. Two years later, we are meeting again to reaffirm the Strategy and, above all, to evaluate its implementation, as both the United Nations and Member States must make ongoing efforts at the national and international levels to implement the Strategy. Now that the Strategy has been in force for two years, we can make a preliminary assessment that serves to reaffirm our beliefs and better orient our efforts in the future.

In that regard, we must emphasize that the phenomenon of terrorism exists at the international level and affects many countries at the national level. We must therefore preserve the Strategy's comprehensive focus on both levels. We urge international mechanisms, especially those established by the Security Council, to take that dual perspective into account and to address it in a balanced manner.

Thus, terrorism must be fought at the global level; it must involve States, regional and global organizations, and civil society. In that regard, cooperation between the different levels must be wide-

ranging and focused on combating all manifestations of terrorism and on strengthening national capacity and international judicial cooperation with regard to extradition.

Thus, States must adhere to international counter-terrorism instruments. The Strategy's plan of action urges States that are not yet parties to the anti-terrorism conventions and protocols to become so and to ensure their effective integration into national legislation.

However, other efforts must also be made, such as the institutionalization of the Task Force by the Secretary-General, in keeping with the provisions of the Strategy, so as to ensure the coordination and consistency of counter-terrorism efforts within the United Nations system. We are pleased that that pending task is to be accomplished.

At the regional level, the Inter-American Committee against Terrorism, of which Peru is Chair this year, has supported the implementation of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy with mobilized resources, exchange of information and specialized knowledge, and by encouraging the establishment and consolidation of national systems of support for victims. We encourage other regional mechanisms to replicate that positive experience.

Those actions at the international level also call for effective and committed national measures. Thus, Peru has drawn up policy guidelines for the period 2007-2011 to fight terrorism head on. The Government of Peru has also made significant efforts to prevent, detect and punish unlawful activities linked to drug trafficking, money-laundering, arms trafficking, abductions and other such crimes. Peru has also hosted various regional meetings intended to enhance the coordination of anti-terrorist activities, particularly through the exchange of information and the training of experts.

Peru believes that the efforts undertaken at the national level, in conjunction with international cooperation, constitute the best means to counter the scourge. Thus, Peru is firmly committed to the Strategy and will continue to do all it can to ensure its success through its implementation at the national, regional and international level.

We should like to conclude by restating our commitment to the Strategy at this time, reflected in our support for the draft resolution to be presented by the facilitator, Ambassador Gert Rosenthal of Guatemala, whom we thank for his work and congratulate on his achievements.

Sir John Sawers (United Kingdom): The adoption of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy by the General Assembly two years ago was an important step in international efforts to deal with the issue of terrorism. The value of the Strategy lies in its four pillars, which establish a broad framework for international action, from tackling the conditions conducive to terrorism to dealing with such problems as terrorist financing. The United Kingdom welcomes such a comprehensive approach, which recognizes that terrorism is a complex phenomenon requiring a multifaceted response.

The Global Strategy was agreed among 192 Member States and represents our common approach to tackling the phenomenon of terrorism and its causes. Terrorist organizations are not interested in the peaceful resolution of conflicts or the eradication of poverty. They pursue their own narrow goals, using violence freely against civilians, and often aim to maximize casualties. Our answer is the unity represented in the Strategy and close collaboration in fulfilling the Strategy's objectives. The United Kingdom is cooperating with many of the Member States represented in this Hall to implement the actions contained in the Strategy and will continue to do so.

It is not just Member States that are taking action; the United Nations system is, too. It has extensive expertise in dealing with the terrorist phenomenon and many resources to back it up. We need system-wide coherence in tackling terrorism, as much as we do in addressing development or climate change, and we are making progress.

The Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force has a crucial role to play, and we welcome the report of the Secretary-General (A/62/898) describing many of the important initiatives being undertaken by its members. A few examples highlight the diversity of work under way. Task Force members are addressing the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism through conferences, UNESCO-sponsored youth events that promote a future without terrorism, and the work of United Nations programmes and agencies in promoting the rule of law.

We have also seen real progress in preventing and combating terrorism. The International Civil Aviation

Organization has approved additional airline security guidelines, and the International Maritime Organization is developing instruments and standards to help protect maritime transport from terrorist attacks. Work by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund on combating terrorist financing has continued to adapt as the technologies to deliver financial services develop. Task Force members have also focused on capacity-building in fields as diverse as assistance with nuclear security from the International Atomic Energy Agency to efforts on law enforcement by INTERPOL or work by the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute on witness protection.

That wide array of activity highlights the challenge and importance of bringing coherence to the United Nations system, and we welcome the Secretary-General's commitment to address the staffing issues that face the Task Force.

The Security Council also needs to play its role in achieving coherence, and I commend the recent efforts of the Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate (CTED) in engaging other parts of the United Nations system. CTED has helped Member States draft legal instruments and guidelines for preventative action, compiled rosters and databases that centralize information on resources available for prevention and response to terrorism, and, where requested, assessed the counter-terrorism capabilities of individual Member States. It has made 19 visits to Member States since September 2006, taking on board the contributions of many other members of the Task Force. We have also seen closer cooperation between all those bodies — CTED, the Monitoring Team and the Expert Group of the Security Council committees established pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999) and 1540 (2004), respectively — which all helps to promote capacity-building for the effective implementation of the Security Council's resolutions. Those might seem like small steps, given the scale of the challenges, but that kind of patient, behind-the-scenes work is crucial to our efforts to combat terrorism.

Denying funds to terrorists and disrupting their activities are very important, but they are not enough on their own. In the long run, we want to reduce and eventually put a stop to people becoming terrorists in the first place. We have to understand the radicalizing influences that draw individuals into terrorism if we are to do that. We need to challenge the extremist ideology propagated by Al-Qaida and its sympathizers and encourage and support individuals and organizations offering positive alternatives. It is also important to improve opportunities open to young people and respond to their aspirations. Lack of access to justice, political disenfranchisement and unemployment can generate the frustration that lures vulnerable individuals in vulnerable communities into violent extremism.

I shall have the honour of taking part in the Secretary-General's symposium on supporting victims of terrorism a few days from now. That groundbreaking event will promote solidarity in support of victims of terrorism, one of the commitments we made in the Strategy. The best solidarity we can show is the effective implementation of the Strategy in all its aspects, with the goal of removing the scourge of terrorism altogether.

The task in front of us is huge. Since the Strategy was adopted two years ago, many hundreds of innocent people have been killed in attacks in all parts of the world by terrorists often citing religious justification for their actions. The willingness of terrorists to resort to suicide bombings means that they would be unlikely to hesitate to use weapons of mass destruction, given the opportunity. Al-Qaida and those groups and individuals buying into its ideology of intolerance continue to pose a risk to the lives of citizens in many of our countries, and they are a serious threat to international peace and stability. That challenge should remain high among the priorities of States Members of the United Nations and of the United Nations itself.

The meeting was adjourned at 1 p.m.